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Photographs and Comment

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Mr. Dooley and Mr. Hennessy

BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

I WAS a Yale undergraduate, with a shoulder sore from carrying a Civil War musket in the old Armory, when I first read Mr. Dooley. We were drilling then with the general idea that Cervera's flying squadron was likely to blow the top off East Rock any day, and that patriotic Americans must rush to the defence of their country. It was an unreal, a romantic patriotism, that felt warm in the heart but queer in the brain. For there was something a little phoney about this war. The eagerness of Spain to give us everything we asked for before we began, did not seem to square with the blazing headlines of the yellow press, warning of death and invasion. And the chaos of amateur soldiers, typhoid camps, heroics, and embalmed beef, the rumors of dynamite cruisers, hay fleets, fat generals with the sun stroke, and troops everywhere except where they were needed, suggested a football practice for a Harvard game in which all the university but the athletes were sent to Yale field and told to get the ball.

FINLEY PETER DUNNE

Then came Peter Finley Dunne. Reading over again his "Mr. Dooley in Peace and War" (much the better of his two important books), the stir and the laughter and the uneasiness of those Spanish War months come back vividly; and several ideas suggest themselves which would have been impossible to our naiveté then.

To begin with, some sense of humor, some willingness to take criticism has leaked out of the country since those days. There are a dozen pieces in this little book whose equivalent could not have been published in any year since 1916 without landing the author in court or jail as a pacifist (Mr. Dooley a pacifist!), a pro-something or another, or a Red. Does any one remember the famous charge of the Tampa mules led by "th' biggest jackass in Tampa to-day, not exciptin' th' cinsor . . . Says Sampson, . . . 'Form-rm in line iv battle, an hurl-rl death an' desthruction at yon Castilyan gin'ral.' 'Wait,' says an officer, 'It may be wan iv our own men. It looks like th' Sicrety iv'—'Hush!' says th' commander. 'It can't be an American jackass, or he'd speak.'" And so on to 'What's needed to carry on this war as it goes to-day is an ar-rmy iv jacks an' mules. . . . Th' ordhers fr'm Washin'ton is perfectly comprehinsible to a jackass, but they don't mane annything to a poor, foolish man.' . . .

"'I shu'd think,' said Mr. Hennessy, 'now that th' jackasses has begun to be onaisy'—

"'We ought to be afraid th' cabinet an' th' Board of Sthrateejy 'll be stampeded' Mr. Dooley interrupted. 'Niver fear. They're too near th' fodder.'"

Mr. Dooley was the only man who didn't know what to do with the Philippines, though he prophesied that Mark Hanna would organize the Philippine Islands Jute and Cider Co., "an' th' revoluchinists'll wish they hadn't." Mr. Dooley knew that "war was hell whin 'twas over." Mr. Dooley knew what ought to be done with the "fruits of victory." "If 'twas up to me, I'd eat what was r-ripe an' give what wasn't r-ripe to me inimy." Mr. Dooley thought that the Porto Ricans who became pro-American over night had "nawthin' to larn in th' way iv . . . th' signs in gover'ment, even fr'm th' Supreme Court."

It is a shame to mutilate these marvelous little satires, each perfectly constructed with a twist at the end as incomparable as the last line of a sonnet. Read "On the Victorian Era," where Dooley celebrates the benefits that have fallen to the race since he came to earth. But "ye haven't been as far east as Mitchigan Avnoo in twenty years," Mr. Hennessy objects. "What have ye had to do with all these things?" "Well," said Mr. Dooley, "I had as much to do with thim as th' queen."

This is debunking with a difference. Something has changed in us since this light-hearted rapier play has gone out of use and perhaps of possibility. But something remains, and as one reads on through "Mr. Dooley in the Hearts of His Countrymen," on reformers and prosperity, on making a cabinet, on the Populist convention, and on national expansion ("I know what they'd do with him [Aguinaldo the rebel] in this ward. They'd give that pathrite what he asks, an' thin theyd throw him down an' take it away fr'm him")—the power of these little papers begins to explain itself.

For Mr. Dooley, in spite of his Irish wit and Catholic tolerance, and Mr. Hennessy, in spite of his Celtic truculence, are American to the bone. It is Dunne, a great American humorist—the best since Twain—speaking in the brogue of Mr. Dooley, choosing the Irish because the Irish then could say anything, because one laughed at the first Irish word. And Mr. Hennessy is the American public. You have only to compare Mr. Dooley with his great contemporary, Kipling's Mulvaney, to see the difference. Mul-

Next Week

THE AMERICAN LANGUAGE
By H. L. MENCKEN
Reviewed by J. D. Dudek

THE WEATHER IN THE STREETS
By ROSAMOND LEHMANN
Reviewed by George Dangerfield

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vaney is witty and Catholic and wise in human nature. But Dooley is all this and more. He has the shrewd skepticism of the Western individualist, the quality of leadership, the power of self-control, though he hates to exercise it against his enemies, the Bohemians and the Dutch. He comes from Missouri. He is the American of whom Kipling wrote while Dooley was still serving beers on Archey Road—

He turns a keen untroubled face
  Home, to the instant need of things.

Enslaved, illogical, elate,
  He greets the embarrassed Gods, nor fears
To shake the iron hand of Fate
  Or match with Destiny for beers.

Mr. Dooley is all that. His Irishness is genuine enough (weren't the Irish governing America?), but it is a mask, a dialect, a jester's license. Underneath he is the American who made this country disorderly, self-reliant, shrewdly realistic, and (intermittently) a self-expressive nation able to run itself if not its government. But where are the Dooleys now? In the American Legion? In the D. A. R.? In the Republican old guard? In the Administration? Some blight of unself-confidence has withered them. Maybe they blew off with the dust storms. Maybe immigration swamped them. Or prosperity did them in. Are they all dead?

Mr. Hennessy isn't dead. Mr. Hennessy believed everything he read in the papers. When "day be day th' pitiless exthries come out an' beat down" on Mr. Dooley, Mr. Hennessy followed the headlines just as the Supreme Court followed the election returns. Mr. Hennessy didn't know where the Philippines were, but he knew what to do with them. Mr. Hennessy didn't know what Dreyfus was charged with, but he was sure he was guilty because he was a Jew. Mr. Hennessy was all for William J. O'Brien because he was Irish from the sixth precinct, and when it turned out to be William J. Bryan who was nominated he was still for him because he had been before. Mr. Hennessy knows that we are a great people. "An' th' best iv it is, we know we ar-re," says Mr. Dooley. Mr. Hennessy, who makes $1.25 a day wheeling slag in the steel mill, proves his hatred of capital by quarreling over the price of wheat in the year of the big wind. Mr. Hennessy is all the yes-men and no-men in America. Mr. Hennessy lives by what was said to him last, believes the loudest shouter, can be calmed in a minute by being told he is an Irishman and a democrat. He is fodder for political cannon, the sawdust stuffing of a dictatorship, the disease of a democracy. Mr. Dooley says anarchists are the sewer gas of a state with bad plumbing, and Mr. Hennessy may be described as the ball bearings of a plutocracy. Mr. and Mrs. Hennessy are with us yet, millions strong; but where is Mr. Dooley?

"I See Be th' Pa-apers"

BY T. A. DALY

THE news in the morning papers of the last Saturday of April, that a great humorist and true philosopher had quietly slipped away into the mists of the night before, brought more than one shock to me and, I feel sure, to many another old friend of Finley Peter Dunne.

To begin with, few outside of his immediate family, so far as I know, had even been aware of his illness—and he had been a mortally sick man for five months. And then there was the headline over the obit that first caught my eye—"Mr. Dooley Is Dead." It was curious that my sudden sorrow should be shot through with the trivial thought, "Peter wouldn't

FINLEY PETER DUNNE: *by Spy*
Courtesy of the Putnam Bookstore.

like that!" It always annoyed him to be called "Mr. Dooley." Besides, "Mr. Dooley" is *not* dead. He has been for some years, it is true, the (half) forgotten (funny) man; but he will live forever. Indeed, the death of his creator may have the effect of reviving "the philosopher of Archey Road," for surely there should be room, at more than a ninety-nine year lease, for "Mr. Dooley In the Hearts of His Countrymen"—which is the title of one of Dunne's numerous books.

It was something of a shock, too, to find how comparatively brief and inadequate most of the obituary notices were. And yet, on second thought—and particularly when I came to dig into our own newspaper morgue for data for this short memorial note—the explanation appeared. Peter Dunne was more than Peter Pan. In one sense he never grew up, he did love to slip into the shadows; but for all that he was a substantial and genial mortal. Perhaps it would be better, considering his racial roots, to call him a leprechaun. He was an elusive sprite. You had to keep an eye on him; but if you did that he would lead you to his hoard of gold—which dripped mostly from his miraculous pen, or from his tongue in convivial conversation.

How well I remember one of my earliest encounters with Peter. I was hobnobbing, one afternoon, with Frank Ward O'Malley, of the *Sun*, in the old Waldorf-Astoria. I suggested that we call on Dunne and make him come out and play. "You can't catch him," said O'Malley, "he's never in his office." But since that office (*The American Magazine*) was directly across Fifth Avenue, only a few steps from the brass rail where our feet were parked at the moment, we went. We found Peter—*mirabile dictu!*—at his desk, but he wouldn't come out to play. O'Malley was full of talk of a prize-fighter who had made his debut the night before, "Spike Clancy," or some such name as that. At that time, members of a certain race which was not noted for winning battles without heavenly help (*cf.* Old Testament, Joshua, etc.), were breaking into the fight game and taking Irish names. Dunne suggested that this "Clancy" was one of those. "No," said O'Malley, "he looked more like a Greek—" "Same thing," said Peter, "these foreigners come over here and get into the limelight under Irish names. Now here's this fellow [chucking his thumb in my direction] who writes Dago poetry. Honest, Daly, what's your right name?"

"I see be th' pa-apers" (a pet phrase of Dooley's) that Mark Sullivan says:

"Peter Dunne was one of the few human beings toward whom, in personal contacts, Theodore Roosevelt habitually bore himself with a smiling but nevertheless serious deference, an attitude made up less of apprehension of Dunne's pen than of sincere appreciation of his deep-reaching wisdom."

I know that Dunne had a real affection for "Teddy Rosenfelt," an affection touched with tolerant amusement, for he was not blind to the Colonel's little foibles. And there was no doubt at all as to how he felt about Vice-President Fairbanks. When the Holland submarine was

(*Continued on page* 16)

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Dr. Cushing at the Front

FROM A SURGEON'S JOURNAL. 1915-1918. By Harvey Cushing. Boston: Little, Brown & Company. 1936. $5.

Reviewed by MARY LEE

AS a war book of the daily journal type, the journal of Dr. Harvey Cushing, eminent brain surgeon, formerly of Harvard, now of Yale, is an epic. Probably no American officer saw more of the war on all the allied fronts than Dr. Cushing. Before the United States entered the war, he served as one of the leaders of the Harvard Unit with the French at the American Ambulance Hospital at Neuilly. After a tour of the British army hospitals in Flanders, and a visit with Sir William Osler in Oxford, he returned to Boston to organize the Brigham Hospital Unit which, as Base Hospital No. 5, was one of the first American hospitals to go overseas in 1917.

Attached to the British Expeditionary Force, stationed at No. 11 General at Camiers, Base 5 immediately started work with British wounded. Dr. Cushing's skill was utilized by the British by sending him immediately to hospitals nearer the front lines. Throughout the costly British offensives from June to October, 1917, he served in the British Fifth Army Area, where 140,000 casualties occurred.

Operating constantly, often taking their lunch and tea in the operating room—to the outrage of British custom—Dr. Cushing and his American operating team pushed their record to eight, ten, sometimes even twelve major operations a day, days seventeen hours long that lasted from nine one morning to one and two the next. Frequently the entries in his diary are dated "2 A.M."

With a short interval at Base 5, during which they took over No. 13 General at Boulogne, Dr. Cushing was again ordered to service at the front line hospitals during the German spring offensive of 1918, where he experienced the chaos of retreating before a steadily advancing foe. All this time he served as member of the Interallied Medical Research Committee, attending occasional meetings in Paris. Finally he was detached from the British, and sent as a member of the Board of Consultants to the American War Zone, with headquarters at Neufchateau. His contacts in Paris with such people as the Richard Strongs and the Robert W. Blisses, his trips to England, where he always visited the Oslers, all enabled him to fit the particular corner of the war where he was at the time serving into the picture as a whole so that one never has, in reading this war diary, that bewildering feeling of not being able to see the forest for the trees.

Nevertheless, it is the trees that remain always in one's mind as one reads this vivid, day-to-day account of the wreckage of humanity that passes through an army hospital. "The marrow of the tragedy is concentrated in the hospitals," Dr. Cushing quotes Walt Whitman in the foreword. The marrow of the tragedy is here—told with the calm detachment of the surgeon:

> One boy had a small temporal wound and stated that there was a hole in his tin hat. The operation showed that a strip of his helmet about two inches long and a half inch wide had curled in through the temporal bone over his ear, passed through the brain, and its point emerged just behind the external angular process. Not a pleasant thing to dislodge. . . .

Case after case, we see them. Time after time he uses the remarkable technique

DR. HARVEY CUSHING

developed at Neuilly in 1915 of running a large nail down through the wound hole into a man's brain until it reached the piece of metal lodged there, magnetizing the nail, drawing the metal out with it. Nothing is said of the daring and skill that operated on many a desperate head case that would have been considered in other hospitals inoperable, but it is not difficult to read between the lines.

Characters, too, emerge from this vast experience as it is recorded by a sensitive and intelligent mind—the character of the French poilus who, "though they acknowledged some pain and great fatigue . . . were cheerful and uncomplaining—even gay. 'C'est la guerre!' is all they say." And the character of the British Tommy, an "amazing fellow"—who when asked about his wounds, invariably says, 'Not so bad, Sir,' however bad it may be."

Even better still, one sees the character of the British officer, who stops to drink his tea, dine and wine at his mess, who has a man to polish his shoes and fetch his bath water, no matter how bad things may be. There is an officer whose tent Dr. Cushing takes over at Camiers who hates to leave, because he had planted a tiny garden round the tent, and who "cycles over twice a week from Etaples to see how 'they' are getting on." Or the British General, "a delicate, scholarly man," whose arm is amputated, who on coming out of the anæsthetic, says he 'sees no reason why he should be removed from duty for such a trifle.'" And there is the British District Medical Officer who, in the face of the German advance of 1918, with the hospital already evacuated and the Germans only five miles away, insists the remaining officers have tea and a walk in the garden before leaving, during which walk he casually produces a large revolver, "no getting taken prisoner a second time—not he—there may be Uhlans about any minute."

In the face of such imperturbability, Dr. Cushing's experiences with the A.E.F. read like the story of a madhouse. It is a tale full of movement, full of action, full of excitement. "I suppose these people have done as well as could be expected," he writes of one unit, "like learning to swim by being thrown into the water after hearing a lecture on how to do it." Even though the Americans are winning, there is a note of sadness. The long strain is telling. His hand shakes so that he cannot operate any longer. Advised to go to the Riviera for a rest, he refuses, drags himself back to Neufchateau. The end of the war finds him killing flies in a hospital bed at la Fauche where he has been persuaded to stay as "a guest."

"War," he writes sadly at the end, "after all isn't hell—it's demoralization, which is far worse." The disillusion that overcame everybody at the last, the spirit of the later war books!

But it's not the spirit of this book. The spirit of this book is the War Spirit. In October, 1917, after a trip into the salient at Poelcappelle, he writes:

> There's a bang, and black earth is thrown up like a geyser 200 yards away and another one nearer. . . . And the savage in you makes you adore it with its squalor and wastefulness and danger and strife and glorious noise. You feel that, after all, this is what men were intended for rather than to sit in easy chairs with a cigarette and whiskey, the evening paper or the best seller, and to pretend that such a veneer means civilization and that there is no barbarian behind your starched and studded shirt front. . . .

That is the secret of war. It is the barbarian behind the starched shirt front that makes wars possible. It is why, in spite of all the war books, wars will not stop.

Mary Lee served in the Red Cross during the War, both in France and in occupied Germany. She is the author of "It's a Great War!"

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The Pulitzer Prize Winners

BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

THE Annual Alumni Dinner and Dance of the Columbia School of Journalism, which took place May 4, is just the proper way of describing what is better known as the Pulitzer Prize Dinner. But it is really an academic occasion. President Butler and members of the faculty, with wives and distinguished

Delar

ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN
For "Strange Holiness."

guests, march into the Commodore ballroom in couples arm in arm, gray beards wag, the reporters at the side table and the sprinkling of literary tea-sters, publishers, columnists are rather subdued by the ceremony. Alfred Knopf and Harry Maule and Max Schuster and Whitney Darrow are all there, hoping for a lucky break. Up at the speakers' table is the head of the Columbia University Press, Fred Coykendall. Two former Pulitzer Prize winners are among the company: Audrey Wurdemann, who took the poetry award last year with "Bright Ambush," and T. S. Stribling, whose prize-winning novel, "The Store," dates from 1933.

But it is a journalists' rather than a literary occasion. Ex-Dean Cunliffe of the School of Journalism gives up eating, so many come to shake his hand. It is not the prizes in letters that most of the audience are waiting to hear about, but who won the reporter's award, and who gets the travelling fellowships.

Enough of us, however, are eager to know what will be the new crop of Pulitzer Prize books. There is Harry Hansen, the ever faithful, and Joe Jackson of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and a dozen other literary hounds ready to bay down the trail. Members of the advisory committee are noticeably absent, perhaps because some of them have been overruled in the past and don't want it to happen again in public. Whether any were overruled this year has not leaked out yet. Perhaps not, since President Butler announces that all votes in the final board that makes the awards were unanimous.

He rises at 9 P. M. sharp—just at the chicken course—after a prominent alumnus has called us to order and said that the reporters present cannot wait any longer for their copy. There is no preliminary speech-making, no history of the awards, only a reading of the provisions for each prize. This gets a laugh, when, after detailed specifications for a good cartoon, the President says, "No award."

A battery of photographers crowds below him as he begins, and tries to drive him off as they drove off Toscanini last week. But President Butler was born in a news patch. "Think more of your manners and less of your bread and butter, young men," he says; and they sink to their knees like a circle of dancing girls, reflectors up, but no more flashing. Then he begins to read.

This is alumni day so it is natural that the press prizes are loudly greeted. Most of all, perhaps, the prize to Lauren D. Lyman of *The New York Times* for his story of the departure of the Lindbergh family for England. But there is hearty applause for the names of Felix Morley (brother of our Christopher) honored for his editorials in the *Washington Post*, and George B. Parker of the Scripps-Howard Press. With two exceptions the awards in letters are given only a clip-clap of recognition. "Honey in the Horn" by H. L. Davis, the prize-winning novel, is announced first, and perhaps for that reason does better. The roar comes, however, when the President announces that the Advisory Board has cancelled this year and for the future the proviso that prizes in the drama cannot be awarded twice to the same playwright. Public criticism* here has had its effect. But there is a rapturous shout when the drama prize is given to Robert E. Sherwood for his anti-war play, "Idiot's Delight." That means something to everybody—perhaps because of the subject, perhaps because it is New York, certainly because the play seemed worthy of honor, and possibly also because it was recently the choice of the vociferous minority of the New York dramatic critics, when their medal was awarded by majority vote to Maxwell Anderson's "Winterset." For one announcement there was not even a clip-clap.

And indeed there was very little discussion of the prizes afterwards. This does not necessarily imply criticism; it does imply disappointment. Too few had read the books or heard of the authors. And indeed while this is a better list than has sometimes been offered by the Pulitzer awarders, it cannot be called distinguished. In fact, one or two categories aside, it would be easy to make up at least two other lists from last year's books that would certainly meet with as much approval—and crown more great reputations long awaiting Pulitzer recognition. This is at least the fourth time since the Pulitzer Prizes were founded, that Ellen Glasgow's superlative merits have been neglected. And there is Robinson Jeffers. —But the Central Committee has this year finally dropped from its announcement the statement that the prizes must go to the "best book"!

* See Clayton Hamilton's review of "The Pulitzer Prize Plays: 1918-1934" in *The Saturday Review* for January 4, 1936.

RALPH BARTON PERRY
For "The Thought and Character of William James."

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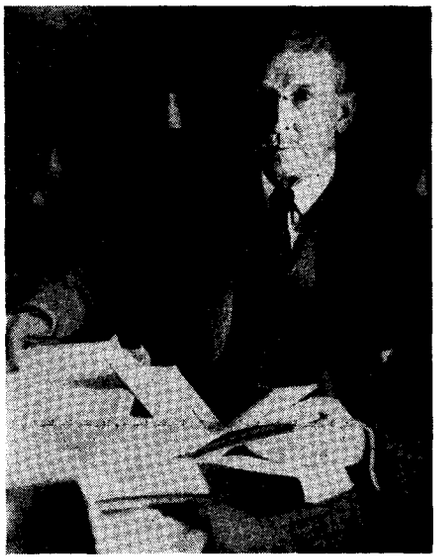


ANDREW C. McLAUGHLIN
For "A Constitutional History of the United States."

The Fiction Award

HONEY IN THE HORN. By H. L. Davis. Harper & Bros.

"It is no book to read in haste," wrote Basil Davenport in *The Saturday Review* for August 24, 1935, "for it contains a world—'a whole ruffian world of pioneers' —the world of Oregon just before the railroads reached it." He goes on, "Mr. Davis describes with a slow, unsmiling, mournful-voiced humor, which seems to have come from our backwoods and our ranches. That is the spirit of this book, and for that, above all the other reasons, it deserves all the praise it is certain to receive as 'authentic Americana.'" "The comparison with 'Huckleberry Finn' is so obvious that a reviewer struggles not to use it, and so inevitable that he uses it after all." Mr. Davis, in winning the Pulitzer award for "Honey in the Horn," has crowned a first effort as a novelist; until the appearance of this book his writing had been confined to short stories and sketches. He made a notable beginning to his career some years ago with a handful of local-color sketches contributed to *The American Mercury* of Mencken's day.

The Biography Award

THE THOUGHT AND CHARACTER OF WILLIAM JAMES. By Ralph Barton Perry. Little, Brown & Co.

A friend and pupil of William James, Ralph Barton Perry has for some years past devoted what time he could spare from his duties as professor of philosophy at Harvard University to collecting the hitherto unpublished writings of his former teacher. He has now won the Pulitzer award for his two-volume biography. Frank Jewett Mather, reviewing it in *The Saturday Review* for November 30, 1935, called the work "a rich commemoration," in which "he has articulated the vast documentation with which he has had to deal." A labor of love, this collection of letters by James with running commentary by Mr. Perry, took its place at once upon publication as an indispensable work for the student of American philosophical thought.

The History Award

A CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES. By Andrew C. McLaughlin. D. Appleton-Century Co.

"Professor McLaughlin's straightforward narrative," said Richard Gatewood in *The Saturday Review* for June 29, 1935, "is never lured by legal niceties from his principal theme, the interweaving development of limited government and of a federal state; the result is a realistic commentary, in terms of this major ordinance, on America's past." Professor emeritus of history of the University of Chicago, Mr. McLaughlin is the greatest living authority on American constitutional history. Curiously enough, a career which has been devoted in the main to the teaching of American history, began with an instructorship in Latin.

The Poetry Award

STRANGE HOLINESS. By Robert P. Tristram Coffin. The Macmillan Company.

Mr. Coffin is teacher, biographer, poet, and novelist. His work at Wells College and Bowdoin College has apparently left enough leisure for constant writing, for the past few years have seen a succession of books from his pen. His "Portrait of an American," a biographical record, portrays a youth spent in Maine, the scene of many of his poems and of his recent novel, "Red Sky in the Morning." Reviewing the prize-winning "Strange Holiness" in *The Saturday Review* of April 20, 1935, William Rose Benét said "I am only afraid that Mr. Coffin may have a fatal facility. He shapes and turns his poems well, and he usually has something not only interesting to write about but also seen and felt. . . . Also his phrase is often extremely good. . . . This book does not surpass others by the same writer. Were it a first book it would not make nearly the impression upon the reader that certain other books of his have made. That he is a good workman is beyond question. But he is also, at rare intervals, a good deal more than that. In this particular volume these intervals are rare indeed."

Ten Years Ago

The Saturday Review of May 8th, 1926, listed the Pulitzer Prize awards in literature as follows:

Fiction
ARROWSMITH
By Sinclair Lewis
(He declined the prize)

Drama
CRAIG'S WIFE
By George Kelly

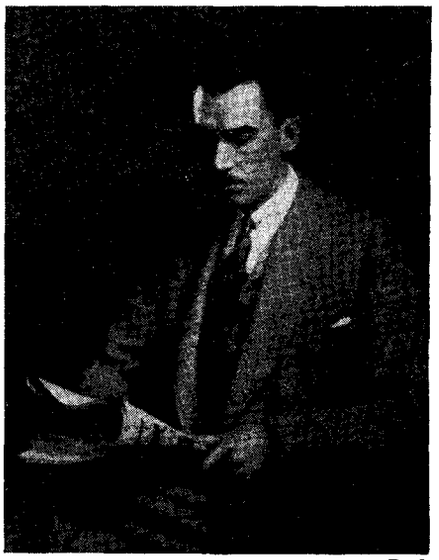
History
THE WAR FOR SOUTHERN INDEPENDENCE
By Edward Channing

Biography
SIR WILLIAM OSLER
By Harvey Cushing
(Dr. Cushing's new book, "From a Surgeon's Journal," is reviewed on page 5.)

Poetry
Posthumously to Amy Lowell
for WHAT'S O'CLOCK

Today

The Saturday Review has held the presses for the story and photographs of the current Pulitzer prize winners.



Pach

ROBERT E. SHERWOOD
For "Idiot's Delight."

The Drama Award

IDIOT'S DELIGHT. By Robert Sherwood. Charles Scribner's Sons.

Mr. Sherwood's talents, which have now been given the accolade of the Pulitzer Prize, flowered early, for at the age of seven he was editing a magazine called *Children's Life*, and at eight he had planned a revision of "A Tale of Two Cities." At ten he was launched on his dramatic career, for he had written a play (never produced). He made his first actual success as a playwright with "The Road to Rome," which met with favor only less great than that of his later "Reunion in Vienna" and "The Petrified Forest." Mr. Sherwood has thus described what he regards as the necessary qualities of the successful dramatist. "To be able to write a play for performance in a theatre," he says, "a man must be sensitive, imaginative, naive, gullible, passionate; he must be something of an imbecile, something of a poet, something of a damn fool."

Mr. Sherwood has been at various times dramatic editor of *Vanity Fair*, motion picture editor of *Life* and the *New York Herald*, and editor of *Life*. "Idiot's Delight" is reviewed on page 18 of this issue.

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The Saturday Review
of Literature

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The Ethics of Popularity

READERS of the *Review* who enjoy a good controversy must have read with interest the conflicting opinions of such worthy antagonists as Katharine Fullerton Gerould and Margaret Culkin Banning. Mrs. Gerould is perhaps our best exemplar of the fastidious school of writers, which is not to imply that her fastidiousness lacks the backbone of scholarship and disciplined taste. Mrs. Banning is one of the most widely-read of woman novelists; a writer who has won her popularity by skilful craftsmanship and a sensitive intellect, as much as by her expert knowledge of what Americans want to read.

To one observer, however, their spirited debate seemed to lack conclusiveness, indeed to point toward an area in which the debaters might conceivably have found themselves in substantial agreement. Mrs. Gerould complains that our popular feminine writers lack depth, that they reflect uncritically the surface show of luxury-loving American life, substituting the contents of a department store for the more elemental emotions, and appealing to woman's wants as the advertiser sees them rather than to the woman herself as, often unknown to herself, she really is. Mrs. Banning deplores the snobbish neglect of popular literature by our critics, who will devote pages to a proletarian novel read only by the intellectuals, and let go unnoticed serials and short stories upon which the imaginations of the millions, who are in effect America, are weekly fed.

Now these shrewd comments unquestionably point to a curious split in American culture which has had strange results. We have often noted in these columns the chasm in American life which separates the academic from the unacademic. In criticism few have crossed that gulf, which is one reason why the laborious scholarship of American universities has had so little influence upon our literature. Now, when thanks to the war and the depression, economics have become a prime concern of government and experts from the academic world have been called in to help with problems which politicians and statesmen alike are unable either to understand or to solve, this long existing divergence between the collegiate and the non-collegiate societies has had most unfortunate results. The experts are called into an area of practical achievement in which they have not only had small experience, but which they are too prone to oversimplify, as men trained in libraries and laboratories and away from the perversities of human nature will often do. Whereas the unacademic community views this irruption of wise men ready to experiment upon society as they have experimented upon guinea pigs, graphs, and the evidences of history, with suspicion, distrust, and dislike.

There is an almost perfect analogy between this situation familiar to all, and the problem of criticism which these women writers raise. As all insiders know, the literary world here, and in a less degree in England, is divided into two dominions, each with its own familiarities, reputations, and standards of achievement. Let us call them, for convenience, the field of magazine journalism and the field of literary books. The two areas intersect at the margins, and there is some, but not much, passing to and fro between them, but fame in one may be, and often is, obscurity in the other. The highest paid, most widely read writer in magazine journalism may be unknown except vaguely by name to the literary minded, and his or her writings when published in book form may make not the slightest ripple on the surface of criticism and engage only the most casual attention of the reader of books. Conversely, the reputations most discussed in the book world, and the books most praised as representing the "trend" of the age, or the "hope" of the literary future, usually belong to writers with names that mean little or nothing to the millions.

And here our sympathy in this controversy goes to Mrs. Banning (who after all, had the last word). Mrs. Gerould is right when she says that a nation fed upon an uncritical and uncriticized literature is culturally betrayed. But Mrs. Banning is a hundred times right in her contention that the snobbish neglect of this popular literature by those whose business it is to direct taste and uphold standards, is culpable. What such criticism could do is another question, too knotty to be discussed in these few paragraphs. But what it would discover (and here again we agree with Mrs. Banning) is first of all that the craft of writing for the multitudes is extraordinarily difficult and requires as definite a talent as does the art of psychological fiction or intellectualist poetry. And second, that the huge cash rewards which come with success in this direction, and which are out of all proportion to the usual returns from so-called serious books, have very little relation to the problem. One makes money this way if one is able to, not otherwise. And third, that if we have few or no popular writers who are also first rate of their kind—no Dickens, no Thackeray, no Longfellow, no Scott, no Cooper, no Goldsmith, no Gray, no Hawthorne, no Poe, no George Eliot even or Harriet Beecher Stowe—a cause may be sought in the failure of literary opinion to produce the right intellectual climate. The first-rate popular author has always written for a public which included the fastidious as well as the unfastidious, and he has been praised, criticized, and taken seriously by the best judgment of his times, not merely rewarded by the masses, and then forgotten. Our popular magazine writing today tends to be superficial, artificial, and cheap for pretty much the same reason that our "serious" literature tends to be esoteric, over-intellectualized, clogged with egoism, muddied with theory, and too often dull. The public is split into lowbrow and highbrow and what is produced for one is despised or neglected by the other. Hence a writer able and desirous to write, as Trollope wrote, for a society neither tolerant of trash and tripe nor disdainful of human interest, is deprived of the stimulus of criticism, forbidden to take his work seriously, and not expected to produce real books. The intellectualists are scornful of his popularity and the magazine masses will lap up his carelessness as eagerly as his grade A milk.

The Spartan Housman A Professor of Latin, obscure to the world in general in his scholarly capacity, but known to authorities in his particular field as an Englishman thoroughly erudite and a commentator and classical opponent both witty and devastating, the late A. E. Housman wrote two small books of poems which live as a unique contribution to English literature. "A Shropshire Lad," his first book, published in the nineties, became world-famous. After over a quarter of a century it was followed by his second, and last, "Last Poems," the brief introduction to which sharply defined his feeling concerning his own verse. His one public lecture on poetry, more recently delivered at Cambridge, constituted his only, highly idiosycratic, published pronouncement on the poetic art in general.

Housman wrote entirely as he was possessed; never for popular applause or financial gain. He preferred simple cadences, with subtle and always effective variations. He conveyed deeply personal emotion with lucid brevity. If there was nihilism in his attitude toward life, there was also nobility and stoicism. We can truly say of him, at this parting, what he himself said "To an Athlete Dying Young,"

. . . set, before the echoes fade,
The fleet foot on the sill of shade
And hold to the low lintel up
The still-defended challenge cup.

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Letters to the Editor: *Two Replies to the Authors' League*

The Copyright Bill

SIR:—*The Saturday Review of Literature* for April 4th, 1936, contains a letter from Mr. Elmer Davis, Vice-President of the Authors' League of America, attacking the copyright bill which I introduced a year ago and which, having been passed by the Senate, is now pending in the House of Representatives. In the interest of public information, Mr. Davis's letter calls for an answer.

Mr. Davis states that the authors alone, of all groups interested in copyright, fail to get a "slice" from what the bill proposes. On the contrary, a dozen or more provisions were put into the bill at the request of the Authors' League and for the particular purpose of protecting their interests. The bill takes away nothing whatever, either in respect of copyright or "moral right" which authors now enjoy and it adds material safeguards, such as recognition of divisibility in copyright; copyright of unpublished works; and legally recognized exclusive right of radio delivery.

In addition, it offers them the best obtainable protection in other countries, American membership in the general copyright convention. Mr. Davis would belittle such protection because of certain temporary restrictions upon international trade and exchange hanging over from the world economic depression. This unsettled situation makes the security of the convention all the more desirable; and the fact that one country may be denying protection (to which Americans have now no legal claim) to persons of a certain race is no argument against accepting a convention that would prevent piracy of works in most of the countries of the world and establish a legal claim in behalf of Americans of all races in the country in question.

Mr. Davis suggests that it is humiliating to American authors to "get copyright on the continent . . . under the fiction that they are British subjects." It might be even more humiliating (as well as financially injurious) if they should be denied the right to be British "subjects" for this purpose. Yet a recent Netherlands court decision indicates that such may be the event. American participation in the convention will provide protection for them as Americans. The pending bill proposes to accomplish by preparing the way for American membership in the convention, which assures them automatic protection in all member countries.

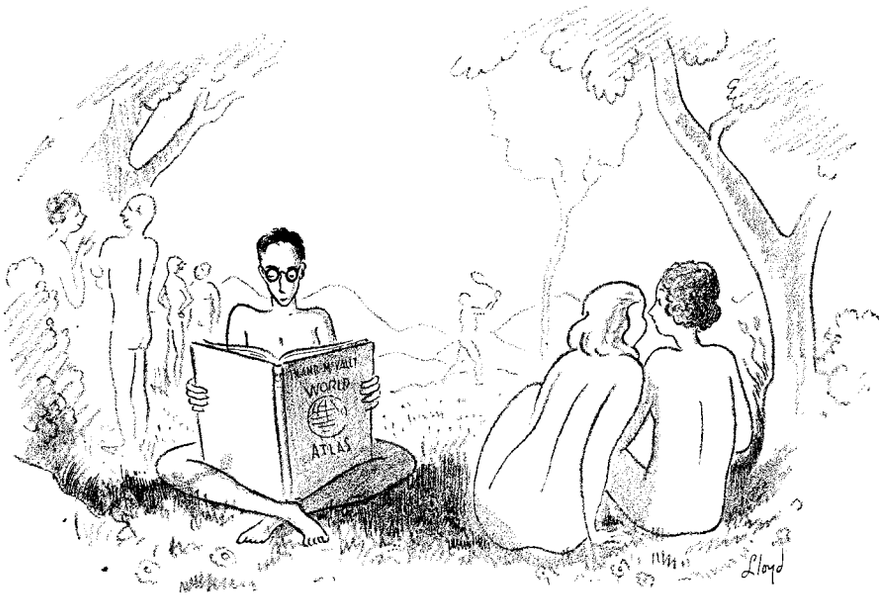
Mr. Davis cannot understand why the bill does not also grant them automatic copyright at home and says no explanation thereof has ever been given. However, it was fully explained in the favorable report on the bill made by the Senate Committee on Patents, and readily accessible explanation has been made in the *Congressional Record* and elsewhere.

Copyright law is for the public interest, not primarily for authors. A large proportion of the public consider registration valuable—for instance as a guide showing when copyright expires. American authors have always registered their works and to continue to do so at home is no considerable burden or expense—as to observe formalities abroad would be. But, the bill does give to American authors, through the treaty, a large "slice" of the automatic copyright which they desire.

The enforcement provisions of the bill have been modified in the public interest, but they are not less effective as remedies against infringement than is the present law. If American authors are, in Mr. Davis's phrase, being sold "down the river," the act is their own and arises out of their own failure to use their opportunity to support a sound measure that is for their benefit, nationally and internationally.

F. RYAN DUFFY.

United States Senate,
Washington, D. C.



"HE CAN'T SEEM TO GET USED TO THE PLACE."

The Actual Copyright Situation

SIR:—Friends of copyright appreciate your editorial note urging enactment of the Duffy bill in order to secure the entry of the United States into the Copyright Union. In 1925 this was proposed in the bill prepared by the Register of Copyright at the request of the Authors' League of America. Now, ten years later, the League is in active opposition and may be chiefly responsible for defeat. This adverse campaign involves attack on the Copyright Treaty as well as the Duffy bill.

THE COPYRIGHT TREATY

Vice-President Davis, in your issue of April 4, dwells upon the predicament of an American author who has sold his book rights in Australia only to find that he must go to that far country in order to spend his royalties! Mr. George Creel at the copyright hearings accentuated Germany's bad treatment of non-Aryan authors, and further opposition to adherence was expressed by George Middleton, Mr. William Hamilton Osborne, and Mr. Chester Crowell. Mr. Fritz Lanham, chairman of the Committee on Patents, suggested that even granting the present bad conditions in Germany and Italy, Hungary and Australia, "by entrance into the Berne Convention we would be no worse off in those countries than we are at present, and we would gain advantages in other countries." Mr. Creel's answer was: "I do not think so."

The Copyright Union was founded in 1887. Accessions have been gradual. Had we entered years ago we would only have been in copyright relations with a few of the countries now members. Suppose Germany and Italy were not now in the Union, would that be a good reason for us to refuse to enter into an advantageous agreement with the remaining forty-odd countries?

No question with respect to copyright has been so generally approved as entrance into the Copyright Union. Our Presidents have considered it,—Arthur, Cleveland, Harrison, Wilson, Theodore Roosevelt, Hoover, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Several Secretaries of State have urged it. Our leading newspapers and magazines have supported adherence. Our universities, colleges, and other institutions of learning are on record in behalf of their professors and teachers to urge adherence. The whole educational and cultural contingent included in the membership of our learned societies desires adherence.

If this session of Congress is allowed to end without securing adherence to the Copyright Treaty, it will lead to a copyright catastrophe of such magnitude that it will require half a century of effort to overcome the evil resulting.

THE COPYRIGHT BILL, S. 3047.

The opposition of the Authors' League is concentrated on the Duffy copyright

(*Continued on page* 20)

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H. L. Mencken Meets a Poet in the West Side Y. M. C. A.

BY E. B. WHITE

POET. Good morrow, sweet Mencken,
Sweet Mencken, good morrow.
This is the West Side Y.M.C.A.
We got asphodel, we got coconut oil.
Tell us about the three abominations, Mr. M.

MENCKEN. (*Picking the skin off a medicine ball*)
Poetry, religion, and Franklin D.
The three abominations be.
Why mince words? I do not feel
Kindly toward the Nouveau Deal.
Hopkins peddles quack elixir,
Tugwell is a phony fixer.
Another lapse
For Homo saps.
Yahweh!
(*He throws the medicine ball and it turns into a Methodist bishop.*)

POET. Now there are three of us.
May I offer you a cigarette, Bishop?

BISHOP. What was that crack about religion?
I'm an evangel, pure and voluble.

MENCKEN. Things unsolved are still insoluble.
The church is just an anodyne;
So are Old Fashioneds and so is wine.
The world wants solace when it's grieved.
I drink beer, but I'm not deceived.
Alcohol is a glut in the larder
Except to induce connubial ardor.

POET. Are you talking about love?

MENCKEN. I'm talkin' 'bout devil crabs, son.

POET. Tell the Bishop about the three abominations. He probably didn't hear when you got it off the other time.

MENCKEN. (*Chanting*) Poetry, religion, and Franklin D.
The three abominations be.
When the world is out of kilter
Someone always brews a philter.
This time it is sunny Frank
Pulling rabbits from his hank.
Preacher, poet, seer, and quack
Simply set the people back.
Stuff like Marx's rumble-bumble
Always makes the ninnies tumble.
Thorstein Veblen dished peruna,
Henry George was goona goona.
Worse it is, the more they love it.
Want me to prove it?

POET. I don't see any harm in giving miserable people something to hope for. Just because their clothes zip up the front instead of buttoning down the back doesn't mean they're happy. They should put their faith in me, if it helps them any.
(*Singsong*)
I say put your faith in me,
I am like a living tree.

MENCKEN. You've got the Dutch Elm Blight, if you should ask. All you poets are sick visionaries.

BISHOP. People should put their faith in God, where it belongs. And in the church, which is the servant of God.

MENCKEN. Eeny, meeny, miny, mo,
Put it in Roosevelt and let it go.

BISHOP. Come, now, the New Deal is a very charitable philosophy. Of course, they are running the debt up rather high, but one can't count pennies in the matter of benefaction.

MENCKEN. Count pennies? Those Isaiahs down there can't count three marbles and make it come out three.
(*Intoning*)
Ickes, Wallace, Tugwell, Frank,
Take the money from the bank,
Give it to the meek in spirit
Whether or not they have merit.
Have some peruna, Bishop?

POET. What *would* you have people believe in, Mr. Mencken?

MENCKEN. Mathematics.
I give my clients
Science.
Two and two are four,
Not more.
All their lives people have added numbers together and got wrong numbers, because they had a dream.
Poetry is the sleepy weed
The dumb, the sick, and the dizzy need.

POET. I believe in dream. People should have faith in the songs poets sing.

BISHOP. Sing one!

POET. What'll it be?

MENCKEN. Oh, let's have the traditional springtime Nature hocus pocus, and get in a little something about the divine intuitions of poesy. Lull me, in other words.

POET. (*Striking a chord on a squash racquet*)
Earth is a mother, long in labor,
Brought to bed in a bank of snow,
Heavy with life—which every neighbor,
Seeing earth so round, must know.

Life is a dream of winter's ending,
Thaw and sap-rise, seed and row,
I am the midwife, earth attending,
Bough and bud and fallow doe.

How shall you pawn the poet's dreaming,
Knowing not the poet's mind?
Blackbird swamp, and the meadow teeming,
Dwell in me and haunt the wind.

Love in the murmurous pond and peeper
Girds the lips of maid and lad;
Follow the march of the freed river,
Earth is glad, oh, glad!

Swaddling life, in green persuasion,
Frightens some, who dare not speak;
I, the donor, give transfusion
To the wishful and the weak.

Hidden wells of words deep running
Twist my magic willow rod;
Come, I see the turtle sunning,
One with earth, and one with God!

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MENCKEN. Well! What do you think of that, Bishop?

BISHOP. (*Rubbing his occiput*) Rather nice, I should say; but it has no Authority behind it.

MENCKEN. You mean it's snake oil but it's not your kind of snake oil.

BISHOP. I mean poets are bad communicants. They haven't got what it takes.

MENCKEN. Neither have horse doctors, but people summon them when horses get sick.

POET. Speaking of horse doctors, I haven't heard you mention your favorite yet today, Mr. Mencken.

MENCKEN. Oh, you mean Heywood Broun. I haven't forgotten him, I'm saving him up, the greasy old evangelist.

BISHOP. I don't think he's greasy, I think he's cute.

MENCKEN. Broun, the people's Serious Thinker,
Swallowed Roosevelt, hook, line, sinker.
He feels that Hearst is a moral coward
And draws his paycheck from Scripps Howard;
He's a major bust, a minor prophet,
He's Pepsodent, he's Little Miss Moffet;
He shoots the works for the Newspaper Guild,
He's got the itch and a dumpy build.
What did you start me off on Broun for? Come on out, you fellers, and I'll split a bottle of atoms with you. Thank God for science at a time like this!

(*They go out, the Bishop rolling rapidly.*)

Noah Webster, Nationalist

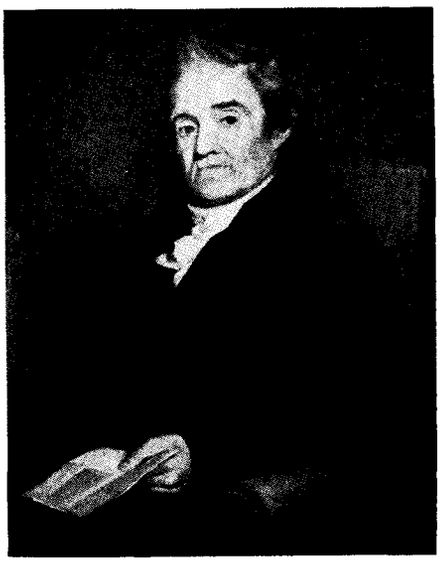
NOAH WEBSTER, SCHOOLMASTER TO AMERICA. By Harry R. Warfel. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1936. $3.50.

Reviewed by HARRY HAYDEN CLARK

ALTHOUGH the last quarter of the eighteenth century witnessed the establishment of the national traditions of America and the expression of nearly all the seminal ideas which have found embodiment in American literature as a whole, full-length scholarly books on individual spokesmen of this great period have been rare. It is encouraging, however, to notice that this situation has begun to be remedied in recent years. We have had, for example, such distinguished full-length studies as Chinard's "Jefferson" and "Honest John Adams," Faÿ's "Franklin," Hasting's "Life and Works of Francis Hopkinson," Ellis's "Joseph Dennie and His Circle," Newlin's "Life and Writings of Brackenridge," Fagin's "William Bartram," Rice's "Crèvecoeur," Pell's "Ethan Allen," Goodman's "Benjamin Rush," Zunder's "Early Days of Joel Barlow," and Cowie's "John Trumbull." No doubt this much-needed attention to these men who assisted at the birth of the nation has been partly encouraged by the desirable tendency toward a closer alliance between social historians and literary scholars, by the growing recognition of the part which writing and ideas played in political matters on one side and by a more liberal and less exclusively esthetic view of what constitutes literature on the other. The period still remains, however, one of the most promising for those interested in fresh contributions to our understanding of the growth of the American mind.

The latest contribution to such a knowledge in this period is Professor Harry R. Warfel's "Noah Webster, Schoolmaster to America." Although Webster is popularly thought of as simply the author of spelling-books and a dictionary, works which Mr. Warfel treats fully and ably, he was also an amazingly versatile thinker and writer who was enormously influential, through his writings, in matters of politics, economics, education, literary criticism, language, public health, and religion. Mr. Warfel's own broad culture has enabled him to follow the trail of Webster's thought through all these subjects in the light of appropriate backgrounds, and his book is artistically unified by its demonstration that, multifarious as Webster's interests appeared to be, they were motivated by one desire, the desire to foster a distinctive *Americanism* in all the phases of our national activity. The genetic approach which Mr. Warfel has used is particularly essential in the case of Webster, for, born a conservative Calvinist, the War for Independence led him to espouse for a time a radical social and political natural-rights' philosophy akin to that of Thomas Paine, while eventually the excesses of the French Revolution, disorders in America, and his native Calvinism led him after 1794 to become one of the staunchest advocates of Federalism. It is thus essential, in discussing Webster, to know *which* Webster is being discussed.

In method and point of view Mr. Warfel's book is singularly well-balanced. He avoids the extremes into which the Freudians, the Marxian partisans, and the "creative" biographers have fallen. He treats Webster with sympathy throughout, and allows him to present himself in the best light, although he is admirably objective in dealing with his ideas. While scholars will doubtless wish footnotes had been provided, Mr. Warfel has obviated their necessity for the most part by citing the dates of magazine articles quoted and by giving bibliographical sources in the rear of the book. He has succeeded at the difficult task of combining careful scholarship and stylistic charm. Without inventing or guessing as the "creative" biographers do, Mr. Warfel reveals such skill in sketching vividly dramatic episodes and such a happy choice of epithets throughout that he succeeds easily in creating the illusion of a living person. He is a scholar who can *write!* And it is not easy to give discussions of spelling books and dictionaries the charm of a novel!



NOAH WEBSTER AT 65
Painted by S. F. B. Morse, 1823.

The book has only one fault worth mentioning, and that, it seems to me, is the fact that there is a tendency to emphasize Webster's Americanism as perhaps a bit too unique and distinctive, to the neglect of the contemporary Americanism of men such as Freneau, the Hartford Wits, Royall Tyler, and Brockden Brown. But I think scholars must agree that Webster was "our first consistent nationalist" if the word "consistent" is sufficiently emphasized, for these other men hardly made Americanism the hub from which the spokes of their varied interests radiated.

Harry Hayden Clark is associate professor of English in the University of Wisconsin.

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Drama and Society

THEORY AND TECHNIQUE OF PLAY-WRITING. By John Howard Lawson. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1936. $2.75.

Reviewed by WALTER PRICHARD EATON

THIRTY years ago a book was published in two volumes, called "The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century." It was not till we had finished the first volume, which dealt with the ancient world, that we discovered the author was ransacking history to prove the modern German nation the capstone of the evolutionary spire. This was a trifle annoying even in those far off days. I was again and again reminded of Chamberlain's "Foundations" as I waded, oft times bewildered, through the scraps of history and philosophy and criticism which John Howard Lawson has assembled in the first half of his "Theory and Technique of Playwriting." So far as I could make out, Mr. Lawson was ponderously paving the way for a triumphant vindication of "proletarian drama," a proof that all plays which do not advocate the overthrow of capitalistic society are not drama at all. Accepting the nineteenth century definition of drama as a conflict of wills, Mr. Lawson involves us in the tortuous mazes of philosophy regarding the whole question of free will, and arrives at the conclusion that a defeatist attitude toward the environment, a retreat from, rather than a battle with, the social set-up, is a negation of drama, In short, he arrives at today.

JOHN HOWARD LAWSON

Whereupon he begins to write about the more practical problems of the playwright, about what we mean by dramatic action, about the choice of material, the determination of the starting point of the play, about exposition, continuity, climax, about dialogue and character, and his book ceases to be vague and dull and rather pompous, and it ceases to trouble us with expectation of propaganda to come. It turns out, surprisingly (for in the past playwrights have not as a rule been the successful analysts of their craft), to be carefully reasoned, closely knit, sound, comprehensible, and extreme stimulating. I do not know, for example, of any other work on playwriting which handles the immensely difficult subject of exposition so well as does Mr. Lawson's, or handles it in such a way that the beginning playwright can sense the importance of the exposition to the play as a whole, and find real guidance in his own personal problems.

If you are to write a play, where would you begin it? It doesn't do to say, "At the beginning," because almost no plays begin there. What guidance can anyone offer to help the young playwright in this, his first problem? Mr. Lawson helps him, or can help him, enormously, I think, by showing him that it is not really his first problem. His first problem is his choice of a climax to his play, the ultimate decision of wills, or the catastrophe, which will be the root idea of the drama. Once that root idea is determined, you look within your climax to find your beginning; that is to say, you start your play with a conflict, or a tension, which holds this climax in solution, as it were. It is true to say that you write your play backward. It may seem curiously illogical for a treatise on playwriting to talk about writing plays backward, yet as a matter of fact the logical dramatists are the ones who do write their plays backward, who do, that is, conceive a root idea and climax, and then trace it back to the moment when the forces which brought it about first began to explode vividly enough to make apparent the causal connection of events. In this way, the dramatist gets a beginning which is right and significant, and a causal progression to his climax which is tight and straight.

Mr. Lawson has little use for the "character is plot" theory of Galsworthy, the idea that the dramatist should start with a set of characters, and let them evolve their story. He is as rigid for plot as Aristotle. He would rule out as bad plays many which have greatly pleased many people. But any young dramatist who wrote to his rules would none the less learn a great deal about the fundamentals of his craft and would avoid numerous pitfalls which spell disaster on the stage.

The basic quarrel which might be worked up with Mr. Lawson is, of course, over the single test of drama as an exercise of conscious will. One suspects that his insistence of this test is in part, at least, the protest of a Left Wing dramatist against the defeatist attitude of society today. A man who acts from subconscious motives, or a man who does not act at all because he feels no chance of success, or a man who is the victim of circumstances that he cannot even get at to pit his will against, may be an interesting stage figure, and even the centre of a play. But not for Mr. Lawson. The drama must be a working out of social forces; these forces must be epitomized in Man; Man must be consciously volitional in the combat. The will must be free if we are to have drama. "Strike, strike, strike!"

Well, there might be much worse doctrine preached to young dramatists today. The behaviorist as hero is a dull fellow, and there is no inspiration in him.

Walter Prichard Eaton is associate professor of playwriting at Yale University.

Innocent Medusa

THE ACHIEVEMENT OF T. S. ELIOT. By F. O. Matthiessen. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1935. $2.25.

Reviewed by DUDLEY FITTS

I SUPPOSE Mr. Eliot has only himself to blame. However innocently, the man's a Medusa. Approaching him, the liveliest critics petrify: a Holy Chill descends upon the suavest prose as the "notes" and "ibids" multiply and criticism passes into theology. This Mr. Eliot, "who"—as Ezra Pound once acutely remarked—"is at times an excellent poet and who has arrived at the supreme Eminence among English critics largely through disguising himself as a corpse": this Mr. Eliot is the only poet I ever heard of who has been able to assist at his own deification, to hear himself discussed and estimated as though he were dead and buried already, and to read (at a by no means late period in his career) a learned account of his Achievement couched in the sweetest elegiac language.

Mr. Matthiessen's book is conventionally reverent, frequently witty, and immodestly advertised as "clarifying the whole nature of poetry, particularly the poetry of today." For the impatient and the curious, may I say that it does not perform this incredible service? What it does is painstakingly and rather unimaginatively to apply the critical canons and methods of T. S. Eliot to the poems and essays of T. S. Eliot. This process may suggest to some the futility of a cat engaged in pursuit of its own tail; Richard Blackmur, I think, has commented on it; but it seems to me that the Eliotine criticism is sufficiently general to justify the process. My quarrel with Mr. Matthiessen's book lies in its failure to follow the method through to something more valuable than academic commonplace. The conclusions are sound, Heaven knows!; but at no time do they strike me as having any more significance than that attained by any competent lecturer before a group of average undergraduates. Beyond that, I can find nothing; I feel that anyone who is mature enough and sensitive enough to read Eliot at all will not need this guide, and that anyone of voting-age who needs it is probably not equipped to appreciate Eliot even with its help. After the melancholy wanderings of Mr. John Sparrow and the recent vulgarities of Mr. Max Eastman, it is true that the dignity and intelligence of Mr. Matthiessen's book are refreshing; but nothing he has done here is so valuable as Edmund Wilson's short study of Eliot in "Axel's Castle," or Taupin's brilliant criticism in "L'Influence du Symbolisme Français sur la Poésie Américaine."

Dudley Fitts, instructor in English at the Choate School, is co-editor with Genevieve Taggard of "Ten Introductions," an anthology of verse.

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A Little Known Country

FINLAND: THE NEW NATION. By Agnes Rothery. New York: The Viking Press. 1936. $3.

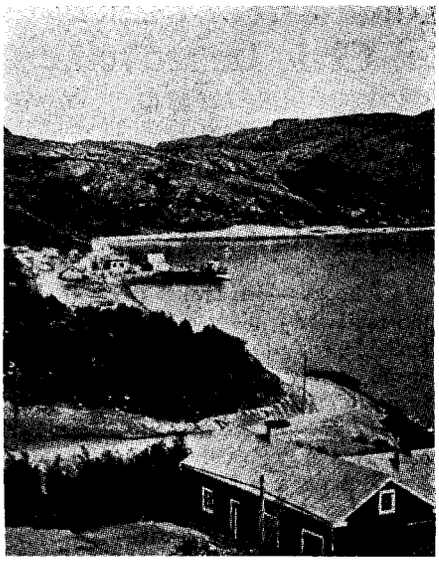
Reviewed by WAINO NYLAND

FINLAND, a young republic of the Baltic, free after a thousand years of foreign rule, with its intensely patriotic, social-minded, athletic, intelligent yet fiery, artistic, mixed population, living by its vast forests and its tiny cultivated clearings, and utilizing its sixty thousand lakes for transportation, is the subject of Agnes Rothery's book. A long time ago, no one knows when, the Lapps were forced north by the Finns who came from southeastern Europe, by the path gypsies still take. Germanic tribes came there from the southwest, and Swedes came over the Bothnian Gulf in the Stone Age. In 1154 the Swedish sword and battle-axe began to Christianize the "heathenish Finn" and brought him "civilized" government. During the eight hundred years that followed, Finland was the battlefield of the Swedes and Russians. She was the victim of wars, famines, plagues, and plundering. Often entire cities were depopulated and demolished. Thus Finland learned to distrust Sweden and to hate the Russians.

Now Finland, with less than four million people, is determined, as Agnes Rothery shows, to gain world recognition and respect. The nation is off with a flying start through Paavo Nurmi and her other famous athletes, through Sibelius in music, and through Saarinen and her other architects who have glorified her cities with new churches, government buildings, schools, and coöperative apartments —exponents of the brilliant intellectual life of the Finns.

Agnes Rothery takes us straight to Helsingfors (only the Finnish tourist bureau calls it Helsinki), the capital. Her description of it is vivid, but academic rather than personal or enthusiastic. One misses the new churches (with separate Finnish and Swedish services) surrounded by athletic fields; the city library, Swedish on one floor and Finnish on another; the colorful droshkies; the changing of the guards; the evening promenaders on the esplanade who stop to drink coffee at the Kappelet in full view of the beautiful South Harbor while the orchestra plays Brahms, Strauss, and Sibelius on request; the city gentlemen (*stadsherrar*), black-garbed in top hats, carrying canes, trailed by submissive wives and respectful, silent children; the gay students who at times get a little too much to drink; the sophisticated married women who have "admirers"—former army officers of the hand-kissing type; the glamorous and sociable foreigners from England, Germany, France, Denmark who drop in at the cafés and order anything from milk to whiskey.

On her arrival in Finland, Miss Rothery encounters the racial problem at once: shall she call Swedish Åbo "Turku" as the Finns do? Is it Helsingfors or Helsinki? Borgå or Porvoo? She decides in favor of the Finnish names except in the case of Borgå, declaring that there are no Swedes in Finland, but only Swedish-speaking Finns—propaganda dished out by the tourist bureau to mislead foreigners. A "Finlander" has Swedish blood in his veins just as truly as an Ålander, as Miss Rothery would know had she visited East Bothnia, one of Finland's largest provinces and the cradle of Swedish freedom and culture. A Finn is a person who lives in Finland and is of Finno-Ugranian stock; a Finlander is a person who lives in Finland but is of Swedish stock, his ancestors having simply moved there from Sweden. In Kronoby no Finn is allowed to buy land. If Swedes marry Finns, they are disowned. This fact accounts for the custom of most men, except in cities, carrying knives at their belts. The Swedes in Sweden (say the East Bothnians) deny that there is any pure Swedish blood in Finland because they are ashamed to have deserted one-half million of their kinsmen again and again in the age-old struggle against Russia.

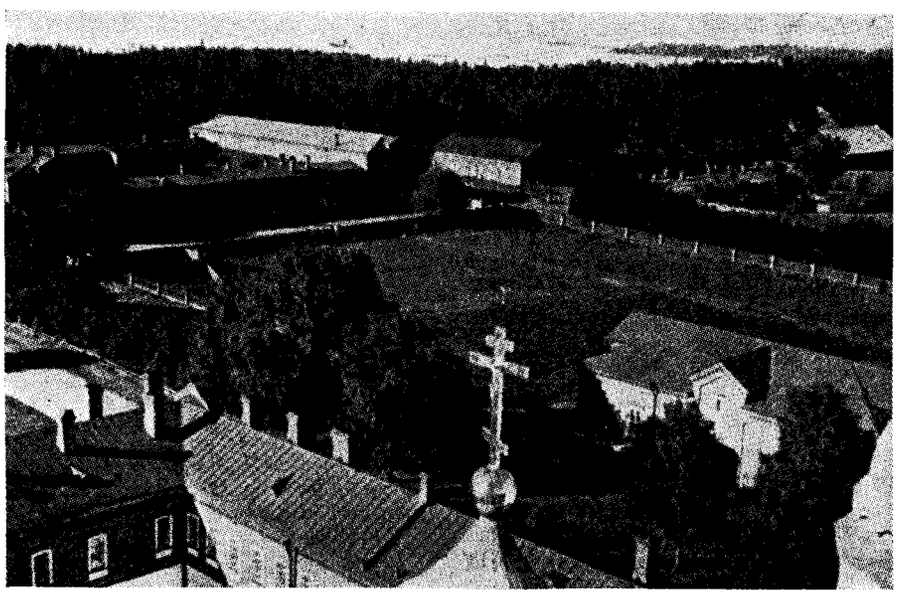


THE HARBOR OF LIINAHAMARI

Miss Rothery's portrayals of Valamo cloister and its monks are interesting. The description of the complete and thrilling isolation of the beautiful lake region is excellent, as is her journey to the far north, over three hundred miles above the Arctic circle, through the perennial green forests, the meadows filled with flowers, and past the reindeer herds and the small Lapp homes with potato patches about them. Her chapters on forest and farm are solidly realistic. She shows the small farmer depending upon his land for food, and upon his dairy, chickens, and winter employment in the forests for cash.

Her account of athletics is comprehensive and entertaining. Here she comes closer than anywhere else to the heart of the Finn, who indicates his social class by correct posture, though she overlooks some evil effects of "Spartan" living. Finnish contempt for weakness has taken a heavy toll of lives among women and children. The mothers, by overwork (equality of sexes but not of strength), neglect their babies. So many "weaklings" have died that over half the graves in Finland are estimated to be those of children under one year of age. The Finn, as well as the Finlander, has all the children God sends him, and lets God help Himself to as many as He pleases.

Waino Nyland is on the staff of the University of Colorado.



THE VALAMO MONASTERY—*for spiritual and agricultural pursuits. Photographs on this page from "Finland: the New Nation."*

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Main Street Under Civic Improvement

THE ROOFS OF ELM STREET. By William McNally. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1936. $2.50.

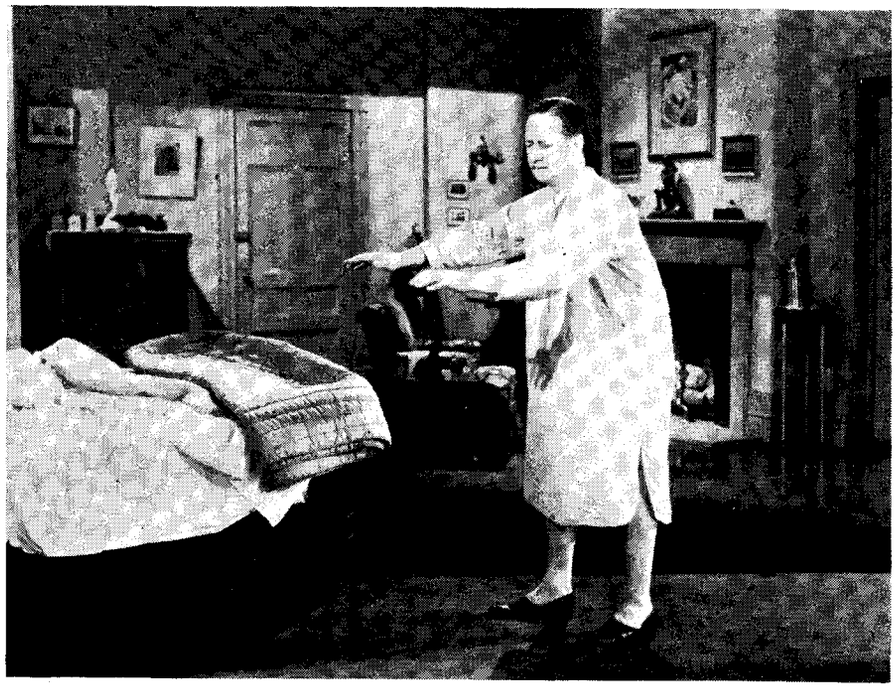
Reviewed by HOWARD MUMFORD JONES

BY reason of its sincerity and talent, Mr. McNally's novel is one of those books which arouse the respect of the reviewer without awakening uncontrollable enthusiasm. A prefatory paragraph invites comparison with "Main Street." This is a tale of a "street which gradually belted the entire Middle West," or rather "a tiny segment of that street." Mr. McNally's is the soberer and more nearly accurate picture; but he lacks the *vis comica* of Sinclair Lewis.

Mr. McNally's tale is of three friends in Minnesota, who, after unexpected success with a lumber company, found a middle class suburb on Elm Street, rear their children, grow old, and die. They are those who succeed. The second and third generations are, with two or three exceptions, weaker vessels; and it is in the relative value to be given success in the one case and failure in the other that the puzzle of Mr. McNally's intention lies. On the one hand, he sees that the eldest generation were better integrated human beings, and that, owing to a variety of causes, their children and grandchildren tend to aimlessness and poor judgment; on the other hand, he also sees that the economic thinking of the "succeeders" is post-dated in the modern world. The consequence of this double standard is an ever lurking uncertainty as to the aim of the novel.

The representative quality of the book is a second problem. The three friends are an Irishman, a German, and a Yankee; if we add the Scandinavian wife of the German, we have an array of characters which rather too neatly represents the sociology of central Minnesota. In the younger generations racial strains blend and disappear or are, at any rate, only sporadically insisted on. I am puzzled to know why Mr. McNally insists on the racial qualities of the first succeeders without doing more with this theme in subsequent portions of the volume.

The book is written in competent, if undistinguished prose. Certain episodes are vividly realized, such as the elopement of Sheila, the daughter of the Scandinavian mother, from her husband. Yet the book seems to run into the sands. The life of the children becomes more and more insignificant—less representative of anything particularly local or racial. It may be that I sadly misunderstand Mr. McNally's purpose, and appear to indict him for weaknesses that he does not commit. For his book is, as I have indicated, honest and thoughtful and may be read with pleasure by those whom these subtler questions of structure and intention do not interest.



ROBERT BENCHLEY
In the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer film, "How to Sleep."

The Benchley Case

MY TEN YEARS IN A QUANDARY. By Robert Benchley. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1936. $2.50.

Reviewed by ROBERT STRUNSKY

WHEN is something going to be done about Benchley? This question must be answered sooner or later, and postponing it will simply increase the complications. Benchley is now forty-seven years old. In five years he will be fifty-two. How much longer can we afford to put him off with soft words and sly gestures, and still look ourselves squarely in the face? How many of us can look ourselves squarely in the face now? How many of us want to?

For nearly a quarter of a century the Benchley Case has been a standing rebuke to the public conscience. Ever since he came out of Harvard twenty-four years ago Benchley has been buffeted by circumstances beyond his control, small things, many of them, to be sure, but they have left their imprint on his personality, and the grim but purposeful youth of 1912 is now the grim but purposeful man of 1936. It is no wonder (or at least small wonder) that he has come to regard himself as the victim of a vast conspiracy, the sole purpose of which is to undermine his central nervous system.

As anyone who looked into his books must know, he believes the world has selected him, out of its unlimited choice, to gang up and crack down on, and there is every reason to believe it has. His books are burning indictments exposing the forces of man and nature which have been marshalled against him. And has he got as much as thanks for his pain? He has not. Instead he has been tossed from pillar to post, materially augmenting his income at each rebound, negotiating fantastic contracts with the movies, deriving fabulous royalties from his publishers until he now lives in circumstances that barely stop short of being Byzantine. But what goes on beneath the surface?

Ever since I have known him (he passed me once in the subway) I have always thought of Benchley as an ancient Greek. I have never thought of any ancient Greeks as Benchley. This may seem curious, but when you begin to see Benchley as a hunted thing, continually pursued by the fates, whether it's to an interior hotel bedroom or an island in the South Seas, you can more easily get the measure of the man.

He spends his days in escape—escape from white suits, meteor showers, shoe salesmen, lack of sleep, stoppage of the breath, the dangers of bass-singing, the quiet but snide conspiracies of small children, thunderstorms, moth invasions, and blood-thirsty birds. His life is an uninterrupted succession of hand-to-hand encounters with the things of the mind. In his essay on the different forms of phobias, he writes:

> Then there is goctophobia, or the fear of raising the hand too far and striking oneself in the face, with the possibility of putting an eye out. These patients keep their hands in their pockets all the time and have to be fed by paid attendants. A nasty complication arises when they have nictophobia, or fear of paid attendants . . . Some of the other little known phobias are octophobia, or fear of the figure eight; genophobia, or the fear of being burned on door-handles; kneebophobia, or the fear that one knee is going to bend backwards instead of forwards some day, and optophobia, or the dread of opening the eyes for fear of what they will see.

Life is closing in on Benchley. Are we going to permit it? Let us put ourselves in his position.

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The Bowling Green by Christopher Morley

The Folder

WE were specially pleased to find Dr. Logan Clendening, in his gay little *Handbook to Pickwick Papers* (Knopf $2.50) speaking of the grand old George in Southwark, last of London's ancient inns with a galleried coach-yard. Experienced clients of this Bowling Green may remember that about ten years ago we described the George at some length. It is of particular interest to Dr. Clendening in his Pickwickian pilgrimage because it is very similar to the White Hart (now demolished) where Sam Weller entered the story.

But Dr. Clendening, in alluding to the hostess of the George, might well have been a little more specific. He was so startled at the George's resemblance to the old Phiz drawing of the White Hart that he asked her if the house had once been called by the latter name. "With a toss of her head, 'There has been a George here for five hundred years,' she boomed."

This was unquestionably the great Miss Murray to whom many of us have paid somewhat frightened homage. She died in the autumn of 1934, aged 81, after having been at the George for more than 60 years. Among her American visitors had been W. D. Howells and Hopkinson Smith; the latter's drawing of the coffee room hangs there still. Among journalists Miss Murray's favorites were E. V. Lucas and James Bone, London editor of the Manchester *Guardian*. It was Mr. Bone who was disturbed by the fact that the George's private bar had no talking parrot. He, with the late Van Lear Black (of the Baltimore *Sun*) and H. M. Tomlinson, chose a very fine bird and it was taken over the river to Miss Murray. The parrot seemed very silent, but the purchasers supposed at first it was embarrassed by Miss Murray's austere bearing. The vendor had guaranteed to exchange it in three months if its conversation was unsuitable.

James Bone, writing in the M. G. at the time of Miss Murray's death, recalled this episode of The Parrot That Wouldn't Talk. Mr. Bone said:—

> The term expired and Jackie said never a word, black or white. The donor's friends heard of this, came to Miss Murray, and suggested another parrot. "No," said Miss Murray, "you won't take away Jackie. That parrot's brought good business to the house. Every man that thinks he can make a parrot speak comes and has a try. They come from Purley and even Brighton. Every one of them thinks he's the man that can make a parrot speak. None of them can, but they all talk about him. That parrot that can't talk is the talk of the town."

At the time of Miss Murray's death Mr. Bone expressed some anxiety as to the future continuance of the George, whose regular trade had dwindled to the hop merchants of the neighborhood. We should be glad if any clients travelling in England this summer would let us know how the old house is getting on. As Mr. Bone, an expert in pubs, remarked, "It deserves to live, for after the New Inn at Gloucester it is surely the most authentically picturesque inn of any in England."

THE GEORGE, SOUTHWARK

In an introduction to a recent Sale Catalogue of the late Dr. R. M. Bucke's collection of Walt Whitman books and papers I wrote as follows:—

"Somewhere in his memoranda Dr. Bucke mentions Walt's pleasure in singing in the bathtub. This was partly the exhilaration of novelty: I suspect it was only when visiting his more civilized friends—such as the Pearsall Smiths in Germantown or Dr. Bucke at the Ontario madhouse—that Walt had access to the luxuries of plumbing. (Even in 1918-19 when I used to go there often I don't remember any bathtub in the Mickle Street cottage.) And in a sense the best of Walt's writing represents humanity at large singing in its tub—a kind of frank booming improvisation—grave, innocent, and clean. (Occasionally a twirling gurgle when the suds go down the drain.)"

To this Mr. W. E. Davenport (Brooklyn, N. Y.) makes charming reply:—

> "I purchased a catalogue of the Whitman Sale last week, and read with a great deal of pleasure your introduction or preliminary essay. There was just one little thing in which I can not agree with you. That is Whitman's bath tub. I was down at 328 Mickle Street, Camden, in 1889 in the spring, and spent an hour or so talking with the good gray poet, but didn't inquire about his tub, and yet when I called at his house which, as you know, is owned by a society, or perhaps by Camden itself, a few years ago, the young man then in charge—I think his name was Livskey—took me upstairs, showed me Whitman's large bed, and then drew from under it an immense tin or pewter bath tub, which he assured me Whitman regularly used. I believe it would have brought $175 at the sale, but I don't think it cost over three."
>
> W. E. DAVENPORT.

P.S. I enclose a little chant on the Whitman Sale.

The Whitman Sale

Here go Walt Whitman's writings,
The auctioneer takes the bids and repeats the bids;
Some items begin low but go higher and higher, a speculator getting them.
Here are letters to and from his mother and from his friends;
Notes, outlines of chants, jottings on health, travel, art, death, love, nature, persons, events, November boughs, the earliest dandelions;
Aims, dreams, conclusions, greetings, ventures and vistas sure of moral growth and consummations spiritual.
And I listening, listening, pondering—I and the thought of him I knew and know today and shall delight in always,
Large, friendly, tolerant, strong, content and self-sufficing.
Little by me is more treasured than that morning in Camden with him, years, decades since.
It appears there is much interest in Walt.
Yet his entire unconcern for possessions for their own sake or their market value is missed here.
His joy in real things, men and women he knew and the Earth itself and one's soul consonant with the Earth—is that here?
Or childhood's sure appeal or manhood's flush of strength or age's mightier charm,
His serious faith, his pride in natural strength,—who bids for these?
Yes, I see Whitman's manuscripts sold. Some are put by—some carefully enveloped and wrapped up, some marked "rare" or "very rare."
They will be carried off and gloated over, and passed from hand to hand, and then gather dust.
But Walt Whitman will not be obtained by any buyer in this room;
He who lived to be imparted to all, as he was imparted to me,
Himself and no manuscripts, I would obtain—

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And own that without which no divine chants were ever chanted or penned.
Yes, one who obtained Whitman writes this.

W. E. DAVENPORT.

Poetry vs. Malaria

SIR:—In re Tu Fu, whose addiction to Snow Bubble Wine and Thunder Tea was recently celebrated in these columns, Professor Giles reports in his *Chinese Biographical Dictionary* that this poet had such a high opinion of his own work that he once prescribed it as a cure for malarial fever. Giles also notes that Tu Fu died as a result of over-indulgence in roast beef, following a long fast.

C. B. BOUTELL.

Donne and Rupert Brooke

SIR:—In the April 25th Bowling Green you quote from a manuscript by Rupert Brooke which was recently sold at the Rains Gallery. I am not, I very much regret to say, the owner of that manuscript; but I do have in my possession the letter which was undoubtedly the genesis of Rupert Brooke's commentary on Donne. It reads as follows:

November 8, 1912

Kings College,
Cambridge
Dear Sir,

I have published a volume of poems which was well-received, and highly praised in *The English Review*, early this year. Some of these poems had already appeared in *The English Review*. Besides being able to write poetry, I know about it; especially in the Elizabethan period. Various University prizes bear witness to my "scholarship."

I know especially about Donne; and therefore I consider that I am an ideal person to review the new edition of Donne (Oxford Clarendon Press) which is just out. If you have not given it to anybody to review, could you send it to me? I think you would not be sorry afterwards.

Yours truly,
RUPERT BROOKE.

If you ever do see the rest of that piece, I hope you'll print it at some later date.

WILLIAM A. KOSHLAND.

New York City.

Ampersands

&&& In response to our suggestion some weeks ago, several poems have been submitted on the subject of *Tracy*, Robert Herrick's spaniel. But, after deliberation, none of them seems available for print. The wittiest, but also the least publishable, is by O. H. &&& Mary Flett, of The Needle and the Anchor bookshop, Saint John, N. B., reports that "people do not only read *Annals of the Parish* (Galt) but buy it, and sell it. Yesterday I sold a copy." &&& Our Classical Department's inquiry about the quotation *Quanto minus est cum reliquis versari quam tui meminisse* was promptly answered by Thomas McMahon (Newark, N. J.) and John Gardner (Lawrence, Kansas). Both inform us that it comes from William Shenstone's *Inscriptions*. It was written for an ornamented urn inscribed to "the beautiful and amiable relation of Mr. Shenstone's, Miss Dolman."

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
FLOWERS FOR THE JUDGE *Margery Allingham* (Doubleday, Doran: $2.)	In 1911 Tom Barnabas vanished from London; in 1931 his cousin is ingeniously murdered. It takes the ineffable Albert Campion to find the connection.	Less hair-raising than previous Campion exploits, but a good sound puzzle throughout, in best British manner, and some real excitement.	Orchids for the author
F CORRIDOR *J. G. Edwards, M.D.* (Crime Club: $2.)	Monmouth Hospital is scene of quadruple killing solved by surgeon and Insp. Bondurant.	Method of poisoning two Drs. and mismated married pair is cleverly worked out but the "humor" is pretty sad.	Diverting
SECRET AGENT NUMBER 1 *Frederick Frost* (Macrae-Smith: $2.)	Agents of three nations, in Monte Carlo and Paris, enjoy themselves killing each other and preventing new war.	Completely fantastic and entirely hair-raising yarn, with galloping action, tangled plot, and guaranteed thrills.	Top drawer
RED WAR *J. P. Philips and T. M. Johnson* (Doubleday, Doran: $2.)	Wicked Red dictator sets world aflame with war but is finally thwarted by Hugh Bayne, ex-movie actor.	Revolution in America: war with Japan: Europe encarnadined: but bravery, Bayne, and bombast triumph.	Somewhat overdrawn
MURDER AT ELSTREE *Thomas Burke* (Longmans: $2.)	True tale of murder of card sharper Wm. Weare by John Thurtell in 1820's and its sad consequences.	A brilliant bit of sporting England and flash life in London handled with artistry and restraint.	For connoisseurs

"I See Be th' Pa-apers"

(*Continued from page 4*)

being given a try-out, and Teddy went down in it, Dunne was present. After the President had safely returned from the waters of Long Island Sound, another guest—a nervous one—remarked that the President had been "inexcusably reckless." Dunne replied: "Yes, it *was* reckless of him to do that—and not take Fairbanks with him." Whether or not Fairbanks ever heard of that, I don't know; but nothing much ever stirred the ice-water in the Vice-President's veins.

There was one prominent American of those days, a generation ago, who lived in terror of Mr. Dooley's wit; and very well Peter knew it. Perhaps the most biting barb he ever shot into any one was this, at the conclusion of a Dooley monologue on the Laird of Skibo:

"D'ye think, Martin," asked Mr. Hinnessy, "is Andy Carnegie happy?"

"Well, Hinnessy," said Mr. Dooley, "he ought t' be. He has wealth an' fame; an' he's a little bit deaf."

But there is much kindly sentiment and a deal of warm poetry in the printed reliques of Finley Peter Dunne, who was a warm-hearted, generous fellow. And what good company he was! It was this genial personal quality that attracted William C. Whitney, who lured him from Chicago to New York to take over the editorship of a newspaper Whitney owned at the time—and then kept him from filling that job, because he preferred to have him for a companion. And it was the bequest of the Whitneys—father and son—that helped to still the pen of Peter Dunne by removing the incentive to further labor. William C. and Harry Payne Whitney, between them, gave him a million—or was it more? Anyway, it may be safely said that there was never a court jester so royally rewarded.

Peter Dunne had been in retirement for many years before his death. But he had always avoided the limelight. One sentence in one of his obits speaks of him as "emerging only occasionally to deliver a witty speech." Nonsense! If Peter Dunne ever stood upon his feet to deliver a speech of any sort, I never heard of it. I often twitted him upon his inability, or disinclination, to talk in public. Nothing could stir him out of his rigid reticence.

And it is this, in a large measure, that accounts for the comparative silence attending the passing of this social historian and everyday philosopher, whose words so delighted and instructed an earlier generation. Here was an authentic humorist, who lived through the age of the ubiquitous Chautauqua, the age of the movies, the age of the radio, and who never once gave way to the temptation to "recite pieces of his own composition." What a debt of love and gratitude we owe to his memory!

T. A. Daly, columnist of the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, *is the author of "McAroni Ballads."*

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The Viking Press presents the successor to "The Case of Sergeant Grischa"

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HEARST
LORD OF SAN SIMEON

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FINLAND
THE NEW NATION

THE AVERAGE MAN'S FATE under Fascism is made clear, authentically and completely, by one of Italy's foremost liberal historians, now self-exiled. A definitive work on a subject of vast import to all of us. **By Gaetano Salvemini.** $3.00

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THE WOOLLCOTT READER

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The New Books

Art

RECOLLECTIONS OF A PICTURE DEALER. By Ambroise Vollard. Translated from the original French manuscript by Violet M. Macdonald and now first published in any language. Little, Brown. 1936. $4.50.

The famous dealer-patron of the Post-Impressionists rambles agreeably in retrospect over his long career, showering anecdotes as he zigzags. In one way or another he has met most of the artistic and literary celebrities of his time, not to mention collectors of various caliber. He touches them off with a mordant good humor. Most amusing is the account of the bedlam in Rodin's studio. Despite the author's previous books on these artists, there is some slight new contribution of incidents concerning Cézanne, Renoir, and Degas. Reminiscences, at second hand, of the methods and artistic opinions of Manet are of a certain importance. The chapter on portraits of the author by Rouault, Cézanne, Renoir, and Picasso is a capital document for the esthetic confusion in which the passing generation has lived. Altogether a very diverting book, though the author's racy colloquial French at times comes off jerkily in translation. An anecdote of Cézanne represents these reminiscences at their best. Owing to a change of frame and label a composition of nudes by Cézanne was successively described as a chaste Diana repelling Actæon and as a chaste St. Anthony repelling an alluring female demon. M. Vollard asked Cézanne what the subject really was and received the answer: "It has no subject; I was merely trying to render certain movements." Which is a parable of a good deal of art criticism.

F. J. M.

Drama

IDIOT'S DELIGHT. By Robert E. Sherwood. Scribners. 1936. $2.

BURY THE DEAD. By Irwin Shaw. Random House. 1936. $1.

The possibility that next week or next year men will again be killing each other with mass efficiency and on the largest scale in history has evoked a number of fine plays this season, notably these two. In the opinion of this reviewer "Idiot's Delight" is not only the best of the anti-war drama but the outstanding play of the current theatrical year.

Mr. Sherwood is probably our most adept and accomplished playwright. No one surpasses him in theatrical dexterity and understanding of dramatic values. Craftsmanship of this order coupled with a stirring, kindling theme, profoundly felt, ought to produce a magnificent play. Which is just what "Idiot's Delight" is. Wise, witty, exciting, satiric, and tragic, it is so completely realized that you don't have to see the current Theatre Guild production to enjoy it fully.

That is to say, this is a play that stages itself in the mind of the reader. Inside of three pages you are sitting in the cocktail lounge of the Hotel Monte Gabriele in the Italian Alps. There is tension in the air; the second World War is just across the threshold of time. In the twenty-four hours that the action covers, that war sweeps over the people of the play like the flood from a broken dam. It jams the socialist delegate against a wall and a firing squad, sweeps the member of the Comité des Forges to a high tide of power and wealth, wrecks the lives of the rest of the cast with the impartiality of an Act of God, and in the final scene destroys the hotel itself under a deluge of bombs. The final turn of the screw is the curtain scene, with Irene and Harry Van, the amazing vaudeville hoofer who would like to try being God, seated at the piano singing "Onward, Christian Soldiers." The play ends in crescendo of sound, guns, shells, and bombs.

In "Bury the Dead," Irwin Shaw has used the long one-act play form that is such a perfect medium for some kinds of dramatic expression. The theme is simple: Six dead soldiers with the smell of corruption already upon them refuse to lie down in their grave and be buried. And when argument, persuasion, prayer, exorcism, machine guns, the commands of generals, and the entreaties of their women have failed to subdue them to decent interment, six dead men are marching up out of their grave to stop "the war that is to begin tomorrow night." The grim beauty of the writing and unfaltering pace of the play contribute to a final impact that is unforgettable.

W. M. S., III

Fiction

DAUGHTER OF DELILAH. By John Taintor Foote. Appleton-Century. 1936. $1.

Mr. Foote is a popular writer of horse, dog, and fish stories. Here's a brisk tale of the stratagem of an angler's wife. The author has written of George Baldwin Potter before. The story will give you amused ten minutes. L. C. H

THE BEAUTIES AND FURIES. Christina Stead. Appleton-Centu 1936. $2.50.

A picture of Parisian life, for one v has never been there. A middle-c Englishwoman runs away from her p sician-husband, to live in Paris wit younger English student (not an ar this is a modern novel, and makes student an economist). There are, ins of long pages of talk about art, long p of talk about lace, the sincerity of y economists, and nothing at all.

Mapurgo, the comparatively har *Geist der stets verneint,* is a talk wielder of words, strange, long, unir gible words. Reference to the dicti may clear up the meanings of the v but not of Marpurgo's speeches.

Coromandel, with the beautiful solicits mysteriously from her window, Oliver goes with Marpurgo on a real Parisian - by - definition binge, during which carpets and spittoons talk Joyce-and-water; Paul Western, M.D., solemnly discusses his wife's misconduct, with sluts and strangers; and everything ends up nowhere: the characters blow out like candles.

But for a modernized picture of Paris-as-you-would-have-it; for sophistication, if polysyllabic incomprehensibilities and unexcited chatter about adultery be sophistication; for weird dreams within dreams; and, so help me, for some trick of style that keeps you merrily on to the end, "The Beauties and Furies" is to be recommended.

S. N.

CAGE ME A PEACOCK. By Noel Langley. Morrow. 1936. $2.50.

Young Mr. Langley dedicates his pleasingly naughty fantasy to the Lunts. It's pretty good fooling and the outright love-making of Althea in the beginning faintly recalls Longus's "Daphnis and Chloe" without having the beautiful innocence of that work. This is a funny story of the old Roman days, featuring Lucrece—somewhat on the James Branch Cabell order of yarns, only sassier. You can read it today and forget it tomorrow, but meanwhile you will have been somewhat entertained. W. R. B.

A NOVEL ABOUT A WHITE MAN AND A BLACK MAN IN THE DEEP SOUTH. By James Saxon Childers. Farrar & Rinehart. 1936. $2.50.

It ought to be obvious to everybody that the relations of white men and black men in the South are not exclusively those of cook stove and plow handle and that racial barriers are not wholly symbolized by gun and rope. More and more as the years go by educated white men and educated black men rub shoulders with each other in a Southern world in which the raw wounds of racial antagonism seldom show themselves. But the barriers remain, indestructible if intangible, and it is of such barriers as these that James Saxon Childers has written in this interesting but uneven novel in which the reasonable and the overwrought are so strangely mixed together.

There is nothing incredible in the South [illegible] such a friendship as that of Gordon [illegible]white man and writer, and [illegible]man and composer, [illegible]s built his writing of [illegible] inevitably [illegible]r. Childers [illegible]e the primi- [illegible], of the Ku [illegible]ces are that [illegible]dship would

22)

[illegible] WEEK'S [illegible] No. 110) [illegible] E— [illegible] /ER." [illegible] alling edge [illegible] dles as the [illegible] ; footprints

And oaks; and brown horse-chestnuts, glossy-new; . . .
All these have been my loves.

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The PHŒNIX NEST

CONTEMPORARY POETRY: BY WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

A NUMBER of the poems in *Archibald MacLeish's* "Public Speech" (Farrar & Rinehart) are familiar to me through first reading them in various magazines. There are most things a good book of poetry should have, in this slim volume. Perhaps the poems in it most significant of the time are "Speech to those who say Comrade," "Speech to a Crowd," "The German Girls! The German Girls!" and MacLeish's note to *Matthew Arnold's* "Dover Beach."

Speaking alone for myself it's the steep hill and the
Toppling lift of the young men I am toward now—
Waiting for that as the wave for the next wave.
Let them go over us all, I say, with the thunder of
What's to be next in the world. It's we will be under it!

But to get the full significance of that last sentence you must read the whole poem. Technically, MacLeish is one of the subtlest craftsmen of our time. He has a nice hand for the wingèd horse. He rides with the right touch on the rein. And he is one of the few poets who combine a vital interest in what is actually going on, with the ability to allude to it memorably. His debt to Pound is still at times evident (see above) but he has also achieved his own unmistakable accent. Sensitiveness, reticence, and strength are a great combination.

In Tulsa my neighbor at lunch talked of *James Daly.* He is a poet, now communist, who also admits, in a note at the end of his present book, to mysticism ("One Season Shattered," The Centaur Press, Philadelphia). In other words, he admits his Celtic inheritance. The one poem in his book that might be called propagandist is, as he says, a "token of affirmation" rather than an achieved poem. His note upon it is extremely lucid and seems to me most rational. His love poetry is his best poetry, as in Section X of "When Thought is Speech." Sometimes his phrase is most adroit, sometimes splendid. His poem on the eagle is fine. His "Two Northern Sailors" are real. But "Delilah in a Garden" seems to me overstraining for effect and "Diomedes' Horses" much ado about nothing. "Palimpsest" is a most peculiar, long legend of difficult symbolism, though very readable. When he interprets a shell-shocked mind he adds nothing in particular to chaos; but "Harlem Express" has good lines; and bad as III is of "Summation," IV, V, and VI are vital and beautiful. There is life-blood in this book. Mr. Daly's critical faculty is not sharpened sufficiently yet, but it will be.

"Vigils" by *Siegfried Sassoon,* (Viking Press) and "Wingèd Child" by *Jean Starr Untermeyer* (ditto) are both good books of poems by established writers. Sassoon's work is always worth reading, but since he is now too overcome by life to imbue his poems with that ironic passion that made his verse against war so great, he cannot interest us as much as he did then. He dwells with "auguries of self-annihilation" for our cities and with a vision of man as a "doomed protagonist grappling the ghostly giant." This is perfectly understandable, and his verse has always distinction and finished craftsmanship; and it is good to have by us, even though it does not transfix us as it did formerly.

Jean Starr Untermeyer can write well and has learned steadily from life and the practice of verse. She has a vatic strain that I find rather too intense; but toward the end of her book are four poems that must rank among her best. They are "Though the Trees Made Answer," "Hill Thanks," "Love and Husbandry," and "He Sleeps." The first is most original and delightful, the second is very adroit, the third a fine analogue of true marriage, and the last—less good as poetry, perhaps—but genuinely moving.

The fourth revised edition of *Louis Untermeyer's* "Modern British Poetry," and the fifth revised edition of his "Modern American Poetry" are now published by Harcourt, Brace. A number of poets in each are more fully represented. Notes have been revised and expanded. In the English volume *Auden, Spender,* and *Day Lewis* are now included, and in the American volume *Horace Gregory, James Agee,* and *David McCord* find a place. The preface to the English volume has been greatly amplified. The price of each work is three dollars and fifty cents.

I can recommend "An Introduction to Poetry," by *Jay B. Hubbell* and *John O. Beaty,* originally published in 1922 and now issued in a revised edition by The Macmillan Company, as a good elementary book, presenting all the technical apparatus of versification, illustrating the different metres and fixed forms, and discussing free verse and certain contemporary poetry. The book is replete with examples of verse of every description.

There is a queer mixture of freshness and staleness in the poems of *John Thompson* in Methuen and Company of London's series of "The Gateway Poets." Possibly because Mr. Thompson is a young Australian, and hence to the English a Colonial, I found his little book recently dismissed with some superciliousness in an English review. This seems to me a mistake. In "The Half-Alive," "Bad Glass," "The Machine," "Awakening," and several poems on the sex-antagonism between men and women, there is telling phrase and individuality in the viewpoint. Mr. Thompson does not, it is true, at times avoid stereotype or poeticality, and sometimes he is clumsy; but he has also, at other times, both vigor and fire. I shall watch his development with interest.

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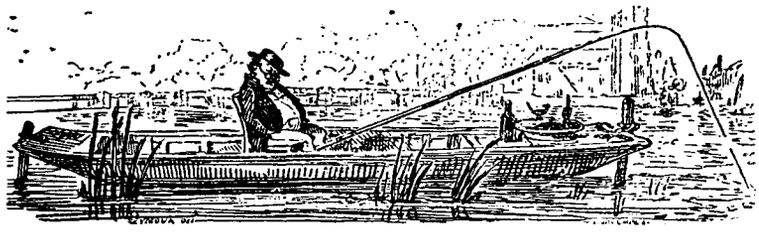

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Trade Winds

BY P. E. G. QUERCUS

FOR every generation some singer is likely to touch the *lacrimae rerum* string with just the tone and technique the human ear craves. In the 1820's it was Byron. About 1860, Fitzgerald put the O. K. in Omar Khayyam. For Old Quercus's own youth it was A. E. Housman; and in the 20's of this century Miss Millay. ☞Quercus, as college boy, vaguely supposed it was the Boer War to which the lads of Shropshire were always marching out; but Miss Steloff at the Gotham Book Mart brought out a first edition of *A Shropshire Lad* and it's dated 1896. ☞Mr. Laurence Housman, younger brother of A. E., made up in number of books for his kinsman's few. ☞We have always wondered what is there in Manilius, obscure astrologer-poet of Rome, that lured Professor Housman into an editing job that lasted nearly 30 years. ☞Q. suddenly remembers that a book called *An Englishwoman's Love Letters*, by Laurence Housman but published anonymously, made a great stir in the early 1900's. If anyone should ask whether the discipline of the classics is valuable to young poets, surely A. E. Housman is a good example.

☞Ruth Carter, Los Angeles, writes taking us to ask for an oversight: we spoke of *Mexican Journey* and omitted the name of its co-author. It is by both Edith Mackie and Sheldon Dick. Miss Carter writes in loyal praise and admiration of Edith Mackie, who saved her money and set off to explore Mexico; but was dissuaded from doing so on a bicycle. Our omission of the name was entirely accident. ☞We understand from Jesse Merritt, the Sage of Farmingdale, L. I., that Walt Whitman's old paper, *The Long Islander* (in Huntington) celebrates its centennial this month. ☞Our old friend President Joseph Brewer, of Olivet College, Michigan, tells us about the Writers' Conference to be held there, July 17-August 1. The staff of lecturers is interesting, including Dorothea Brande, Nannine Joseph, Allen Tate, Alfred Kreymborg, Jean Starr Untermeyer, Caroline Gordon. ☞President Brewer, who was formerly head of Brewer, Warren & Putnam, will discuss *What a Publisher Thinks About.* ☞One of Carl Sandburg's talks is entitled *Hyacinths and Biscuits, or What is Art and When?* ☞The Dodge Publishing Company announces for late May a book that should fill a vacation need: Smith and Shay's *Complete Guide to Cape Cod.* ☞Which reminds us that among the many books about that sandy elbow of Massachusetts was one called *Cape Coddities*, written by one of the two eminent publishers who have the same initials as Robert Louis Stevenson.

☞Mr. Harry Snyder, of Snyder & Hall, foreign representatives, has returned from his spring trip to Honolulu. Snyder & Hall have moved their offices to 449 Fourth Avenue, in the thickest vein of the publishers' Arterial Highway.

☞Old Q. is always interested in the "beautiful circuiting" (Keats's phrase) of the fiscal web. Here's a delightful young Japanese journalist who writes us that he can't afford to pay his S.R.L. renewal until he receives the modest royalty on his translation (into Japanese) of a well-known American book. ☞"The living condition in our country," he adds, "is far from Marco Polo's description."

☞Norman Alexander Hall, 67 Union Street, Newton Center, Mass., celebrates the 10th anniversary of his shop with "the credo of a small-city bookseller." He says:—"I do not think there are very many of us. Once there was a movement to have bookstores on every American corner; or at any rate somewhere in the block. The pious hope has in a sense been fulfilled; though the corner bookstores carry mostly drugs. But I venture to think that a general store, and not a specific store, was the original idea. Alas! Due to the pressure of The Times (about which we have agreed not to talk) most of the general bookstores have folded their tents like the Aryans; and the rest have fallen into the worse way and become circulating libraries."

Split Second Exposure

By Louis Greenfield

Curtain! And the sun swung into action—hot and bright on the Spring grass stage of Sheep Meadow in Central Park, Saturday, May 2, when Uncle Sam went impresario and tossed off assorted entertainment before 25,000 gay kiddies and adults in the form of a WPA May Festival created and conceived by its five cultural divisions—Music, Art, Theatre, Writers, and Circus and Vaudeville.

The spirit of a carnival filled the acres and save for the absence of those Gentlemen of Chance who operate the Three Shell Game, Central Park for this one afternoon turned circus. Youngsters ranging in age from six to thirteen asserted lung pressure in brass bands, choruses, and in a drum and fife corps that sent sound waves from the Tavern-on-the-Green to the Zoo.

Remo Bufano crashed through with a puppet show. And following this Harlem on the Harlem River leaped into the center of activities with a dash of musical comedy called "Dixie to Broadway." No amateur stuff here but smooth professional performances by show folks who have fallen on lean days, my friends.

The circus! Three rings of action lead off with dog acts—the general type of curtain openers. The Joe Jackson type of tramp cyclist with a couple of stooges to play the straight angle . . . clowns dashing madly at groups of children and playing up to the cops . . . And the finale—the Masked Marvel sliding on his back from a height of 200 feet—one hundred feet from the bottom to the top and one hundred feet from the top to the bottom making a total of 200 feet, ladies and gents—on a thin wire rope. O. K. professor, swing it, and down comes the masked Marvel unhurt, unperturbed amidst thunderous applause. . . . The show ends. The WPA came through!

Letters to the Editor

(*Continued from page 9*)

bill. That bill was drafted with the primary purpose of enabling the United States to enter the Copyright Union; but it also amends existing law for the benefit of our authors. The initial change proposed is to declare the author to be the first owner of copyright and of any subsidiary rights embraced therein. The divisibility of such rights is established and is under the full control of the author. The proposed new term of fifty-six years, in lieu of our present term of 28 years with possible renewal for 28 years more, will be a distinct gain. There are many minor changes proposed which are beneficial. Copyright is accorded to authors of architectural works, choreographic works, and pantomimes, and to works prepared expressly for radio broadcasting. Authors of contributions to periodicals and cyclopedias are assured protection as well as authors of anonymous and pseudonymous works. Incorrect entries may be corrected.

One new right is of special significance: that the author retains the right to claim the authorship of his work and "to oppose every deformation, mutilation, or other modification of it which may be prejudicial to his honor or his reputation." The Authors' League has recorded objection to an added proviso allowing the assignee or licensee of the author's moral right to make changes in his work when he has granted permission. These gains are not denied, though they are very grudgingly admitted. But the charge is made of "discrimination" against American authors and of "rights being accorded foreign authors denied to our own writers." These charges are based upon the fact that in order to enter the Copyright Union, we must accord foreign authors copyright without formalities. Reciprocally, our authors will be protected without any formalities in the forty-odd other countries of the Union. Nothing is taken away from our authors; they are only asked to continue what they have been doing for generations, namely complying with present prescribed conditions.

The alternative is "automatic" protection for all authors, domestic as well as foreign. I proposed an amendment to secure this at the copyright hearings on April 3, 1936. To be complete and effective, it involves not only release from deposit of copies, from insertion of copyright notice and registration of claims to copyright, but the elimination (1) of the requirement of American manufacture; (2) of the prescribed filing of affidavits of compliance; and (3) of the penalty declared for making a false affidavit (sections 15, 16 and 17 of the Copyright Act of 1909).

Voluntary registration is, however, provided for in the proviso:

> That for the purposes of preserving evidence of ownership and facilitating transfers of copyrights and rights thereunder, any author or his executors, administrators or assigns *may* obtain registration for such works upon complying with the provisions of this Act.

Will the Authors' League of America now give support to this proposal?

Thorvald Solberg.
Former Register of Copyrights, 1897-1930.

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The Compleat Collector

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On the House

THERE are two particularly rich soils for publishers' bloomers to bloom in. One is the jacket and the other is the title page. No spot on earth is quite so universally taken for granted as a title page. Anything can and does happen there. Misdated titles have always been so common, preceding even the invention of the title page itself, that this sheet could be covered with instances of them. Roman-numeral dates are especially susceptible to miscitation —they are awkward things anyway, and one suspects that not even the Romans could read them off so glibly as the world has led itself to suppose. But why an author should blandly pass a misreading of his own name on the title page is difficult to understand, though it has happened time and again. Alexander Woollcott's plethora of doubletons has befuddled thousands of people who know better than to write Irving Cobb or Reginald Werrenrath, but the title page of his first book, "Mrs. Fiske: Her Views on Actors, Acting, and the Problems of Production," calls him Woolcott. Forty years ago H. G. Wells was not even H. G. Wells to his London publisher, who labelled him H. S. on the cover of "The Time Machine" but H. G. on the title. This was the book which introduced Wells to America—as H. S. on cover and title alike. William Henry Herbert, W. H. Longfellow, and Kudyard Kipling are of record. The 1810 London edition of Peter Beckford's "Thoughts on Hunting" attributes it to his kinsman William Beckford, the author of "Vathek." In 1893 the alert—a little too alert—firm of Lovell, Coryell & Company assembled several of J. M. Barrie's serialized sketches under the title of the longest of the group, "A Tillyloss Scandal." The original edition was in wrappers, but a reissue in cloth appeared with the lettering "A Tillyloss Scandal/Doyle" on the shelfback. Oddly enough, Barrie and Doyle were at the moment engaged in their only collaboration—the operetta "Jane Annie."

When, by the way, is a title not a title? Suppose cover and title page differ? "Mark Twain's Sketches, New and Old" was "Sketches Old and New" on the shelfback in every copy of every edition in the original square blue cloth format. And what of Thomas Bailey Aldrich's "Pampinea and Other Poems," which is puckishly designated, also on the shelfback, "Poems of a Year," and not in one freak copy, but in every copy ever beheld by man? What of Oliver Wendell Holmes's sunset gun of the Breakfast-Table series, "Over the Teacups"—"Teacups," that is, on the title page, but "Tea-Cups" on the covers of the earliest copies and "Tea Cups" in still other copies that are demonstrably later?

There is another classification of howlers which could have been avoided by a slightly higher degree of application to the business in hand. Martha Dickinson Bianchi's "Life and Letters of Emily Dickinson" has an inserted plate of Samuel Bowles which in the first printing is captioned J. G. Holland. A modern translation of the Koran bears on its title page a representation of an animal which would offend a good or even a backslid Mohammedan. A New York publisher, issuing a manual of his own authors with biographical data, assigned the birthdate 1867 to one of the most illustrious on his list, and the distaff side of the list at that. The date was corrected by hand, in every reachable copy, to 1876.

For some errors there exists no slightest shadow of excuse—not even laziness or ordinary carelessness and taking-for-granted. What of a novel of recent years which contained considerable French dialogue and rendered every *je* as *fe*? Or a scientific treatise by a famous celestial physicist whereof the jacket identified him as a "noted astrologer"?

There remains an assortment of shortcomings of which each is *sui generis*. Francis Otto Matthiesen's "Sarah Orne Jewett" includes among its illustrations a reproduction of the envelope that brought Miss Jewett her first acceptance from William Dean Howells of the *Atlantic*. After the book was issued, the awful truth burst on some party to the enterprise that the stamp was still affixed to the envelope, and that, technically, reproducing a stamp in an innocent book illustration is just as much counterfeiting as reproducing stamps to sell. Accordingly a blob of red ink was hastily superimposed on every guilty facsimile, thereby directing everybody's attention to what nobody would have noticed—not even, perhaps, the Secret Service. Black ink, which was soon after substituted for the red, achieved a more effective but still unhandsome effacement. Incidentally, those book collectors who prize copies of the 1901 London edition of Theodore Dreiser's "Sister Carrie" as exemplars of the first regularly published edition, ought to draw their shades o' nights. The book is a unit in the Dollar Library of American Fiction, and one of the preliminary pages is embellished with a blurry but unmistakable half-tone representation of a dollar bill. True, it is a midget dollar, measuring rather less than three and a half by one and a half inches. But people have gone to Leavenworth and perhaps Alcatraz for less.

There are publishing blunders that do not get into books. Not many years ago one house underestimated the length of an important biography by a round hundred thousand words, and the major operation which set things (so to speak) right may have kept the patient from winning a Pulitzer prize.

Could Cassius have been a publisher? How else explain "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves"?

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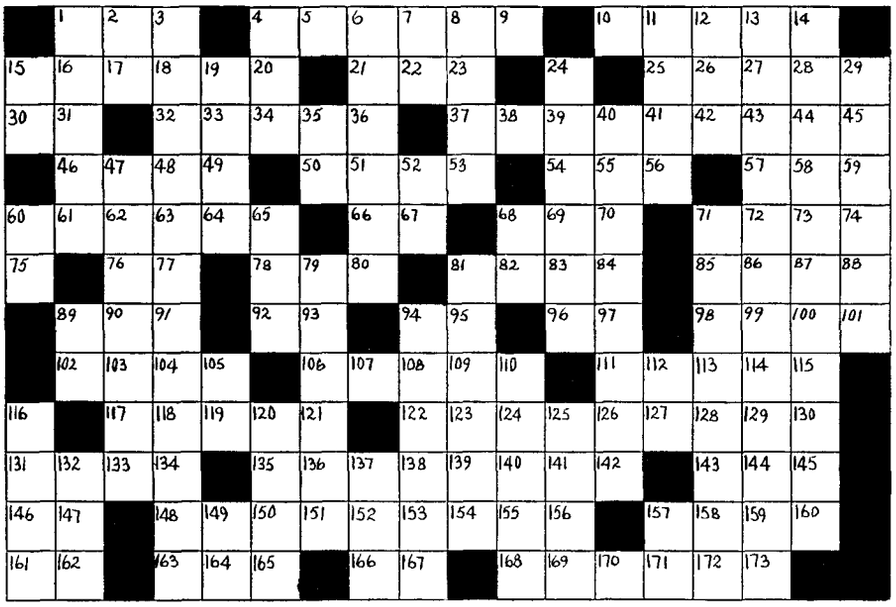
Double-Crostics: No. 111

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY



DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-four words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Unless otherwise indicated, the author is English or American.

The solution of last week's *Double-Crostic* will be found on page 18 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

I. Famous 19th-century violinist.

II. Too forward.

III. Author of "Eugene Aram."

IV. English newspaper owner (1865-1922).

V. Operetta by Noel Coward.

VI. Father of King Arthur.

VII. Stylish (slang).

VIII. Time not long past.

IX. Abrasion.

X. Rumored.

XI. A barbarian.

XII. Dining hall.

XIII. Apart.

XIV. A pickle relish.

XV. Tenuous, delicate.

XVI. Eager, longing.

XVII. Founder of Salvation Army.

XVIII. Aloof (colloq.).

XIX. Disregarded.

XX. Informed.

XXI. Prophetess in the Book of Judges.

XXII. Not elastic.

XXIII. Snares.

XXIV. Anserinae of Anatidae.

WORDS

137 118 161 148 47 24 146

90 133 30 129 58 93 101 142

115 166 76 121

156 55 87 168 131 23 100 116 77 102 83

25 154 68 66 170 52 162 85 34 158 91

64 96 143 159 36

54 163 46 92 147

49 105 29 22 141 12 151 6 165

144 1 56 125 43 32 152 128 164

59 79 103 14 124 31

78 95 108 82

135 112 15 99 37 122 57 104 84

106 28 62 13 86

140 98 38 71 117 123 63 50

3 153 69 126 72 51 113 26

73 42 18 11 172 9 114

157 44 155 74 2

97 107 167 41 173 75

119 150 33 88 109 80 130 40

45 60 8 16 127 139 21 111

145 53 4 67 110 132 169

35 89 70 61 81 48 160 20 171 10 120 134

39 138 149 7 19 65

94 5 27 17 136

The New Books

(*Continued from page 18*)

have been destroyed by many little but bitter wounds. Mr. Childers destroys it with an axe: A threat from the Ku Klux to emasculate Parker because with Nicholson he had played his symphony for Nicholson's sister. From that innocent music and mean brutality the book moves on not only to the destruction of the two men's friendship but to the trial of the Negro on a trumped-up charge (of which he is acquitted) and the suicide of the girl who is broken by the image of brutal racial misunderstanding.

Mr. Childers has written a strange book, disjointed yet often beautiful, wise but sometimes almost incoherent. From his original statement of his mental melodrama he departs to tell the most romantic life stories of both his black man and white man before he returns to their common drama. Much of his writing is exquisite, indeed sometimes his prose runs to a poetry close to mysticism. But from such poetry he turns to the most prosaic prose. Altogether he has written much that is excellent, much that is stirring and beautiful, but he has hung it all together loose and long like his title.

J. D.

Miscellaneous

TWENTY YEARS UNDER THE SEA. By J. E. Williamson. Hale, Cushman & Flint. 1936. $2.50.

About twenty years ago when people were trying to make up their minds whether motion pictures would ever amount to anything, two young men, the Williamson Brothers, brought back from the Bahamas several thousand feet of film entitled "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea." It was a sensation, and deservedly so, although the dramatization of the Jules Verne story was crude, and the acting, mostly performed in diving suits, necessarily merely incidental to the portrayal of life at the bottom of the sea. The great moment was a fight between a man and a giant octopus.

The debt of the movies to the Williamsons has never been suitably acknowledged. People began to speak well of the celluloid entertainment and its possibilities. It seemed that the films could bring to audiences an entire new world of wonder. The gross receipts of the pictures were upwards of a million dollars, almost equalling those of D. W. Griffith's masterpiece, "The Birth of a Nation."

One of the brothers, J. E. Williamson, now tells in "Twenty Years Under the Sea" how he developed his apparatus, and how he overcame tremendous difficulties. In recent years, for strictly scientific purposes, William Beebe has gone far beyond the Williamsons with his bathysphere, but this in no way detracts from the fascination of the Williamson recital, which is embellished by fifty-five full-page illustrations. Despite the fact that the writing is extremely amateurish, and that there are such surprising errors as repeated references to the Smithsonian "Institute," this account of an excellent job, excellently done, is of absorbing interest to all who are interested in the mysteries and perils of under-sea adventure.

R. B.

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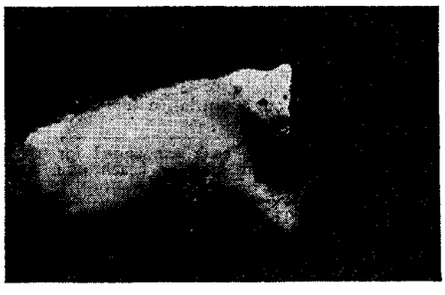

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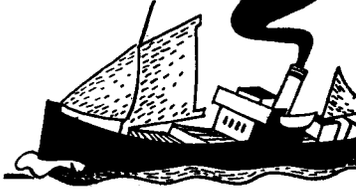

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